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THE NEW REPUBLIC

*A Journal of Opinion*

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# Keep the Offensive!

THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF ICELAND, and the substantial American forces sent to Trinidad and British Guiana are grand good news. They mean that the giant of the Western World is at last rousing himself from his long, almost fatal lethargy and is preparing to fight for his way of life. Iceland in German hands would be a great danger to American security. It could control North Atlantic shipping so as to make supplies to England almost impossible. It would offer one side of a pincers movement directed against the United States of which the other side would be an approach through the South Atlantic. Both these dangers have been greatly reduced at one stroke by the President's action, begun several weeks ago.

For the British the occupation of Iceland is good news of the first order. At the very least, the convoy problem is now cut in half. American war vessels will now patrol the entire sea lane between Canada and Iceland. American merchant vessels can carry supplies as far as Iceland, under the protection of the American flag, since the little North Atlantic republic is not inside the combat zone fixed by President Roosevelt under the neutrality law. Great Britain's problem is suddenly reduced from one of 3,000 miles to one of less than 700 miles. Every one of her vessels, whether naval or mercantile, should therefore become four times as useful as heretofore. This means that the menace of the submarine and the dive bomber should be reduced by a still greater proportion. The experience both of the last war and of the present one shows that when a convoy is adequately protected with destroyers and fighter planes, losses fall close to zero.

The real criticism of the President's action is not that it goes too far, but that it does not go far enough. After all, transshipment of goods from American to British ships at Iceland will necessitate serious delay. Even when there is no such transshipment, turning over a convoy from American to British hands in Icelandic waters is a grave interference with rapidity of transport. We would urge on the President with all possible emphasis that he should follow this dramatic and effective stroke with others. We are momentarily at one of those crises in history where immediate action on a great scale can turn the course of events for decades to come. That is why for many Americans these past days have had a nightmare quality unique even in a time when for month after month we seem living in a bad dream from which we are unable to awaken. Hitler's attack on Russia is not a reprieve for the West, as so many people seem to think. He has turned against the Russians in order to eliminate all danger in that quarter and to be able to throw his full strength into the attempted invasion of England. However much we may hope that the Russians will hold out, we must face the fact that a majority of the experts believe Germany will probably win and may do so in only a few months or even weeks.

If she does, the situation for Great Britain and the United States will be serious to the last degree. The Russian menace has kept immobilized for many months

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on Hitler's Eastern frontier perhaps 40 percent of the German air force and probably more than a million soldiers. While the German losses seem to be heavy, enough men will be left, with Russia out of the way, to make the threat to England more serious.

Our future, therefore, is dark; and the darkest thing about it is the tendency which still exists among so many Americans to continue "on the defensive"; not to fight until the enemy is on our doorstep; to take full advantage of the supposed strategic value of our supposed geographical isolation. The one great truth driven in upon us by the past year and a half is that the only possible defense today is an offense.

At this moment, we have a brief golden opportunity to take the offensive in the most concrete possible way. Hitler has stripped the Western front of men and machines, including airplanes, for his war with Stalin. As a result the British are able to bombard military objectives throughout Western Europe on a great scale and with minimum losses. But British bombardment will not win the war any more than German bombardment caused the British to give in, a year ago.

Last week we urged the necessity of an immediate invasion of France or North Africa, to be made possible by immediate full participation by the American navy in the war in the North Atlantic. The President's action in sending troops to Iceland goes a long way toward meeting the necessary conditions. In this week's issue, on page 55, a former French officer supports our argument. He both advances technical military reasons for this step and asserts that 90 percent of the French people are opposed to the puppet government of Vichy. The British and the Americans together can certainly muster sufficient equipment and manpower for creating a second front at one or another of the three points, Brittany, the Marseilles region and North Africa. If they don't do it now, at once, it may be years before the repetition is possible. Such a diversion would be of the utmost value to the Russians; five divisions thus employed would be worth fifty divisions fighting on the Stalin line. But more than that, it would have inestimable psychological value to the embattled forces of democracy. It would show that we are not decadent, as Hitler says, and will not give up our whole civilization without anything more than a last-minute, improvised and passive defense.

We hope that the action taken in Iceland, Trinidad and British Guiana will prove the forerunner of a new attitude of increased determination and vigor in Washington. After all, the President must be more than a delicate galvanometer to register the fluctuating moods of the American people. He must be a leader; he must lead them even when their inadequate information and unmatured emotional states make his action seem to some of them premature. We must fight for our way of life, and fight now, and the President must be in the van.

## A Senator's Narrow Escape

If the Germans had happened to torpedo the ships carrying American troops to Iceland, or the British transports carrying troops away, the chief sufferer, outside of the immediate victims, would have been Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, leader of the bitter-end American isolationist forces. For it would have been recalled—as it has been recalled—that he gave the Germans advance notice of the move by a public speech in which he revealed that armed forces were being dispatched to Iceland. We disagree heartily with Senator Wheeler about the war, but he is too valuable a liberal in a country in which all the liberals are needed, to be lost by political suicide. We trust that Senator Wheeler will not be so reckless in the future with the safety of American soldiers or with that of his country. It is one thing to oppose a war by legitimate debate, quite another to reveal military secrets to the enemy.

## Labor Thunderclouds

John L. Lewis is a cantankerous, unrelenting fighter, moved too much by vanity and personal jealousy, and reckless of the welfare either of the nation or of the individuals who may suffer in his drive for power. Granted. John L. Lewis is the principal personal obstacle to unity in the labor movement, and made a glaring blunder by his support of Willkie in the last campaign. Granted. Does it follow that his recent attack on the President and on Sidney Hillman in a conference of CIO chiefs can be ignored? Quite the reverse. He is too powerful and dangerous to be helped by his opponents. Nothing can help him more than to give him just grievances to exploit, or to render large sections of the labor movement more ready to follow his lead by creating the impression that the administration is turning its back on the New Deal and playing the game of the reactionaries in domestic policy.

Yet that is just what many recent acts, or failures to act, on the part of the administration, have been doing. The administration failed to give labor equal representation with employers in the defense organization. It failed to force expansion of productive facilities early enough. It failed to check inflation and a rising cost of living at the start. It failed to put the heat on Congress to prevent war profiteering. It used troops against striking workers, without ever having resorted to force against recalcitrant employers. Dozens of minor incidents give disturbing evidence that these dangerous tendencies represent a widespread drift. We do not overlook the great gains of labor, or the President's generally liberal attitude. We simply point out, with the utmost urgency, that if these errors are not corrected while there is still time, and more of the same kind are not avoided, Mr. Lewis is going to be in a

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position to make serious trouble if he wants to, and it is quite possible that he may.

The administration could dramatize its good intentions both wisely and justly by joining the CIO and the AFL in outspoken opposition to the anti-labor bills now pending in Congress.

## One Step Forward

One mistake in regard to labor was corrected when it was decided to form official labor advisory committees to work with the new vertical industry units in the OPM, parallel to the industry advisory committees. It is a pity that at least this was not done in the first place. But the correction is half-hearted and will not enlist labor's confidence before it is proved in action. Which committees will the OPM in practice most consult, and which will have the most influence? Labor remembers that the OPM itself is largely in the hands of big-business men. Why not have a single committee for each industry, including equal representation for labor and capital, as Philip Murray long ago suggested? And why not make sure that labor has at least equal power, not merely in advice, but in actual administrative decision?

## Good End of a Bad Business

The ugly story of the strike at the North American Aviation Company, at Inglewood, California, turns out to have a fairly happy ending after all. Through the efforts of the National Defense Mediation Board, the company has signed a contract with the union giving it most of what it asked for in the first place. Beginners will get 60 cents an hour instead of the present 50 cents, but will rise in three months to the 75 cents they demanded; for everyone else, 75 cents is the minimum; all production workers get a general 10-cent increase. President Roosevelt has withdrawn the army and returned the plant to its private owners.

We are not very proud of the way anybody acted during the strike. The owners were harsh, stubborn and openly showed a "let-'em-eat-cake" attitude. The strikers walked out in the middle of negotiations after an agreement had been made that the results would be retroactive to May 1; the government apparently used much more force than was necessary, bullied the strikers while seeming to ignore the sins of the company, and threatened all labor with induction into the army as a reprisal for striking in a defense industry. This was open coercion—despite plenty of evidence that coerced men don't produce—and it made the army the equivalent of a jail, which must have left a bad taste in the mouths of 1,400,000 soldiers. Now that it is over, we can thank our stars it was no worse; but we can also ask ourselves why it is that we find it necessary to keep on making the same mistakes repeatedly? Is it really true that we learn nothing from history except that we learn nothing from history?

## Set Fire to Forests!

The world is in flames and the words that men send through the air are instantly tested. None is worth speaking, none holds meaning, that is not hard and plain. Stalin used two kinds in his broadcast, elaborate ones and direct ones. The effort to explain how it happened that a Nazi army was on Russian soil was elaborate. The USSR had made a non-aggression treaty with Hitler and Ribbentrop, he said, because the USSR was a peace-loving nation; the USSR gained time to prepare for their attack; but Hitler and Ribbentrop are fiends and cannibals; and "a grave danger hangs over Russia" because the Red Army was taken by surprise. A treaty with "fiends and cannibals" is a mistake and the more words used to explain it the plainer the mistake.

The part of the broadcast that men everywhere noted carefully used only a few words. "Set fire to forests," said Stalin, calling for guerrilla warfare. Words of this kind, used by the head of a state, carry hard meaning and conviction. Russians know what guerrilla war is. It is cruel, tough fighting and can be effective. Chinese communists have reduced it to a science and have hamstrung Japanese armies of occupation with it. What is going on in the two or three-hundred-mile strip of Russian land, 1,200 miles long, that Nazi armies have crisscrossed and cut up is not pleasant to think about. We should think about it though, for it means that the Russian people are fighting the Nazis with desperate determination. It is to our plain advantage to help them in every possible way.

## A Purge for American Reds?

Russia, fighting for her life, badly needs aid from the United States. She is hampered by several things, including the conviction of large numbers of Americans that Communists are extremely undesirable people. For their attitude, the public actions of the Communist Party of the United States, in its efforts to follow Stalin, are largely to blame. If this country is to give Russia all possible aid, as we ought to do in our own interest, the wisest act of the American Communists would be to seal the mouths of all their spokesmen with adhesive tape, and drop entirely out of sight. There are rumors in circulation that they have already received substantially this advice from Russia; if they don't take it, it would not be at all surprising to see Moscow put them out on the end of a limb and saw it off. As suggested above ,their past somersaults in the air have been taken in the attempt to follow Stalin's own end-over-end acrobatics; but that is unimportant; next to those who disagree with him, Stalin loves to liquidate those who have conspicuously made fools of themselves in trying to carry out his wishes. A word of advice to the American Comrades: Head for the storm cellars, and quickly.

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## What Do the German Bishops Want?

The statement of the Catholic bishops of Germany, protesting Nazi policies in Church matters and urging all Catholics to stand fast in their faith, is welcome as a courageous act in defense of religious freedom. But we doubt very much if it can be interpreted as going beyond the interests of a single faith to embrace the broader ideal of human freedom. The bishops attacked the Nazis for closing their schools and kindergartens, for confiscating their cloisters and institutions and putting them to non-religious uses. They condemned the practice—popular in the writings of Alfred Rosenberg—of asking individuals to choose between Christ and the Fatherland. On the other hand they warmly praised the achievements of German soldiers, reiterated their loyalty to the German government, described how theological students were fighting in the field, and said they would gladly share the burdens and sacrifices of the times provided no compromise with their faith was demanded. It is this last remark especially that leaves one a little uncertain of the bishops' motives. Are they suggesting, as they appear to be, that Hitler's aggression will be warmly supported by the Catholic Church provided the Catholic kindergartens are returned to their proper uses? Are they suggesting that a non-aggression pact might be signed between the Pope and Alfred Rosenberg? If they are, we would suggest that they learn from their Soviet enemy the true meaning of such pacts, or else prepare themselves for the loss of far more important things than kindergartens.

## Too Dear for His Whistle

Life Magazine says of Lieutenant General Ben Lear Jr.: "He loves nature and horses." General Lear's unhorsed soldiers also love nature. Twelve hundred of them saw some girls in shorts playing golf. As we understand the situation, the abbreviations added to the charm of the landscape and aroused in the young men admiration and a deep poetry. Milton probably covered the situation when he spoke of "the lure and whistle of earthy preferment." At any rate these muted poets, lacking the time and the tongue of a Milton or a Bobby Burns, resorted to the mundane and well understood device of expressing admiration by expelling air violently through the lips.

Unfortunately, General Lear, lover of nature and horses but apparently no poet, was also playing the course. Since he was doubtless keeping his eyes strictly on the ball, we can't imagine how he even knew what the army's finest were whistling at. At any rate, into the jaws of the general in civvies rode the 1,200. One yelled "Fore!" at him; another addressed him as Buddy. The general ordered the men to proceed to Camp Robinson, Arkansas, 150 miles away, then to return immediately to Memphis, then to travel to Camp Robinson once more—this time, it was hinted, partly on foot. This punishment seems to us to be excessive. If the flower of American manhood is to fight for the right of (the slender part of) American womanhood to wear shorts, certainly he ought to be permitted to pay her the compliment of an innocent whistle. Infantry generals ought to leave those high horses to the cavalry.

## Of the Company of Holmes

When The New Republic was twenty-five years old, one of its friends who was then seventy-eight wrote us a little note. He said that he thought this paper had helped people who, as he put it, "are trying to do their duty to their own consciences, to their country and to their God." The courtesy, the generosity and the principles were characteristic of the author of the greeting, Senator George W. Norris, whose friends, somewhat to his embarrassment, insist upon saying publicly that his eightieth birthday is the important event of this week. Senator Norris has some enemies, for he is a good fighter. They are people whom he has balked in their effort to pocket natural resources of his country, which he thinks belong to everyone; and some people are annoyed with him now because he insists that 1941 isn't 1917. But has any man in the United States more friends? The friends have a strong bond. They are people who want to try to do their own jobs as well as Norris of Nebraska does his.

## Last Week

W. Lee O'Daniel was elected United States Senator from Texas by 1,100 votes out of 571,000 in a field split among 26 candidates. A thin triumph for the brass horn of hill-billy music over the divided counsels of responsible democracy. . . . The New Masses wins the loud-talking prize of the week, however. "We are proud of the part we played in helping clarify the issues and nourishing all that was best in American life," says that weekly editorially, explaining "Why This Is Our War." . . . The American Peace Mobilization, recognized some time back as a Communist-front organization, also sang a new tune. So did Joseph Curran, president of the National Maritime Union. Richard Merrill, head of the United Office and Professional Workers of America, likewise felt the need of releasing a press statement to clarify his position. . . . The crank on the mimeograph machines spun busily as the imperialist war took a new turn. The Keep America Out of War Congress, of which Mary W. Hillyer, an old-line Socialist, is executive secretary, held its course. . . . The American Labor Party brought out the first issue of a weekly newspaper, The American Laborite. A feature article pointed out that more than 700,000 New Yorkers are living in fire traps without toilets or proper ventilation. A useful paper to read to check on such matters as the current effort by real-estate men

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to reopen tenements that have been inhabited only by rats for some years, to meet the housing shortage. They would be "renovated." . . . The British estimate that they need 50,000 tanks to win the war. The British Press Service also says that India can produce 90 percent of the munitions required to equip her field army of from 500,000 to 1,000,000 troops. If so, Wavell has a striking force at his command in his new job.

# A Bad Tax Bill

THE NEW TAX BILL drafted by the House Ways and Means Committee is calculated to increase tax receipts by $3,500,000,000 in accordance with the suggestion some months ago by the Secretary of the Treasury. This will, it is estimated, increase the cash revenues of the federal government to $13,000,000,000 in the fiscal year 1942, and the Committee assumes that there will be left an operating deficit of $9,000,000,000.

But things have moved rapidly since Secretary Morgenthau made his proposal. We are now planning to spend $14,500,000,000 on defense in the coming fiscal year, and the amount ought to be greater if production can be sufficiently speeded. Thus the expected revenue would not even cover defense expenditures. At the same time, inflation has already begun, because the productive capacity of industry and transportation was not expanded rapidly enough to meet the huge demand set in motion by the defense program. If the government has to borrow a minimum of $10,000,000,000 in addition to its cash receipts, inflation will be given a gigantic shove, unless some way can be found to borrow that money by tapping incomes and savings, rather than by an expansion of bank credit. The first criticism of the bill is therefore that it does not dig deep enough.

The second criticism applies to the apportioning of the revenue among the various kinds of sources. Increases on corporate and personal income taxes are expected to yield $2,468,000,000, new excise and miscellaneous taxes $1,035,000,000, while the remainder will come from a boost in the taxes on estates and gifts. Our tax system is already topheavy on the side of excise and sales levies, together with other "regressive" taxes—*i. e.*, those that are passed on to the ultimate consumer and thus bear more heavily on the poor than on the rich. This is especially so if state and local taxes are considered. Even if no more ought to be raised by the new bill, the Committee would have done better by levying a larger proportion on corporate and personal incomes. In view of the need for revenue, excise taxes will probably be necessary, but the progressive taxes should be further increased.

How might this be done? This question leads straight to the most glaring defect of the measure—the revision in the excess-profits tax. This is extremely moderate, in view of the profits being made, and to be made in the future, out of the defense program. At present the corporation, after paying its ordinary income tax, theoretically pays an extra tax on remaining profits in excess of those it made in the base, or pre-war, period. The tax begins at a low figure, and is graduated up to 50 percent at the maximum, according to the size of the excess. The only change in these rates recommended by the Committee is an increase of 10 percent in each bracket, so that the maximum is now 60 percent. In Britain every company pays to the government 100 percent of its excess profits, so that according to law there is no profit being made out of war. We shall allow our war profiteers to collect from 40 percent up, if the Committee's proposal is accepted. Worse than that, however, some corporations with immense excess profits are not paying a cent of tax on them, because the law allows the company to choose whether it will reckon its excess over the total amount made in the base period or on the percentage of profit to invested capital, above a specified minimum. Thus a company which has an inflated capitalization and has been accustomed to a low percentage of return might now be making hundreds of millions a year more, and still not be above the minimum allowable percentage. This is the case with some of the defense industries taking the biggest war profits. The Committee recommends no change in this procedure. Only one important concession has it made—normal income taxes are no longer to be deductible in reckoning excess profits. Excess-profit taxes (which are likely to be at higher rates) are, however, deductible in reckoning normal taxes. It is obvious that an honest excess-profits tax could raise many hundreds of millions more from this source.

The individual income-tax payers, however, have to make up for part of this extreme leniency to corporations, in so far as they have not already discovered loopholes in our extraordinarily complex and inefficient income-tax system. The burden is placed chiefly on the small and middle incomes out of those now subject to tax. The surtax is to begin at 5 percent, progressing more rapidly than before and reaching the top at 75 percent. To this is to be added the extra defense tax of 10 percent. The exemption is not reduced. Nobody can legitimately object to this burden in view of the national emergency; it is likely to be heavier later and is far heavier now in Britain. We do object, however, to the fact that extraordinary profits do not carry their share of the load. Most of the incomes in the middle and lower brackets, which are hardest hit, are not derived from profits in defense industries and will not be substantially increased by any growth of dividends.

A further and unjustifiable change in the personal income tax is that husband and wife are to be compelled to make joint returns. This is an unjust penalty on those women who have achieved financial independence, as well as on those married couples who live separately. The whole trend of modern law and pro-

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gressive custom is to regard the wife as an individual, both personally and economically. There is no more justice in forcing married couples to pool their financial arrangements than to do the same to single men or women who share expenses in a club or apartment, or than to follow the old rule of regarding a wife's property and income as her husband's, to do with as he pleases. Now that many millions of women regularly work in industry and the professions, it is too late in the day to think of the earnings of the wife as a luxury. Far better, if need be, to reduce the exemption for the "head of the family" so that it will not exceed the combined exemptions of two individuals.

Finally, why have not the fiscal authorities, either in the administration or Congress, given the slightest consideration to the Keynes plan, or some modification of it? This is at once a way of sharing more equitably the sacrifice of war, of preventing inflation during its course and of cushioning the return to a peace economy. It would be far better to lower the exemption on personal income taxes, and collect revenues directly from those with lower incomes, than to injure them indirectly as at present with a miscellaneous lot of sales and excise taxes. If this were done, the Keynes plan would be applicable. It would use at least part of the money so derived as payment for bonds, which could be cashed after the war. By this means the government would ensure that a larger part of the money it must borrow would come out of incomes rather than credit expansion, there would be less pressure of demand in markets, leading to inflation, and the workers would have something laid by to see them through the post-war transition. We shall come to something like this next year. But the time to do it is now. As in so many other things, a year from now may be too late.

## China's Four Years

THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA is now entering its fifth year of war with Japan and the time is a good one for us to do a little stock-taking. First, let us recognize that in "aid to America" no country has done more than China. For four years she has immobilized our mutual enemy, taking her strength, destroying her manpower, hampering practical coöperation with her partners in the fascist axis. Those who look on China as a stepchild among the countries we should aid might reflect how different the position of America and Britain might be today if China, in 1937, had shared their policy of appeasement. In aiding China we are not showing disinterested generosity, we are repaying a debt which has cost China thousands of lives and a large part of her country.

How have we repaid that debt? We have loaned China about $175,000,000 in the last two and a half years, part of which she has paid back in shipments of wood oil, tungsten, antimony and tin. American relief agencies have sent money and supplies totaling about $5,500,000, mostly obtained from Chinese residents here. The American Red Cross has sent supplies valued at about $2,000,000, and other groups have also assisted in raising money and supplies. American management of the Burma Road has doubled trucking capacity between Rangoon and Chungking and a corps of American experts will soon arrive to step up transport still further. Our hundred pursuit planes, flown by American army pilots, will soon inaugurate an air convoy to accompany and protect the trucks on their passage up the Road.

This is the credit side of our aid to China and it cannot be dismissed as negligible. If it could stand alone as our sole contribution to the Sino-Japanese war we should have reason to be moderately pleased with ourselves. Unfortunately it must be set side by side with another kind of aid—the aid we have given to our enemy Japan since 1937.

Since 1937 we have sent Japan $1,000,000,000 worth of supplies, 64 percent of which were war materials. In 1940 we banned shipments of high-octane gasoline and aviation lubricating oil, but still our export of oil to Japan increased in that year by $10,000,000. In the same period the export of iron and steel semi-manufactures rose 100 percent. In the first three months of 1941 we sold Japan more than $4,500,000 worth of copper and $11,706,000 worth of gasoline and oil.

We will leave it to the individual citizen to judge how effective our aid to China has been when it is balanced against our aid to her enemy. In the meantime let us give our warmest thanks to China for having fought our battle as well as her own through four long years, for having, in Paul V. McNutt's words, held off the "now . . . distant temporizing partner of the Axis thuggery," and above all for having rejected the belief that realism in the contemporary world consists of feeding the mouth that bites you.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

*A Journal of Opinion*

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# Leon Henderson's Future

WITHIN A FEW DAYS, and perhaps before these lines are read, a bill will be introduced in Congress asking permission for the administration to fix prices. It is of the utmost importance that this bill should be passed, and promptly. The immediate reason is that the price situation is getting entirely out of hand. The more distant but no less urgent reason is that control of all sectors, including prices, is vital to successful continuance of our preparedness effort.

Of the immediate crisis the cause is the defiance of the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply by the Chrysler Corporation and the Furniture Manufacturers' Association, instigated, some OPACS officials believe, by members of Congress who have challenged the legality of Henderson's actions in nailing down the prices of certain commodities. The result is that all of Henderson's price schedules are endangered.

But there is a more basic threat than this. Prices are rising throughout America, starting in the basic commodities and on the farms; spreading through wholesale prices to the retail markets; pressing upon the millions of consumers who live on the margin of subsistence, for whom price rises are like court sentences, condemning them to less fuel, less clothing, less nourishment at a time when stronger, not weaker, citizens are needed for defense.

Among the raw materials, the wholesale prices of copper and lead have risen 16 percent over the levels of August 1, 1939. Zinc has risen by 30 percent; hides by 32 percent; rubber and steel scrap by 35 percent; raw cotton by 36 percent; and wool tops by 45 percent. Cottonseed oil has risen by 140 percent, and burlap by 141 percent since the same base period. In foodstuffs, sugar has risen 22 percent; coffee, 55 percent; butter, 57 percent; corn, 66 percent; hogs, 68 percent; and tallow, 89 percent, all within the last twenty-three months. Today wholesale prices are rising at the rate of one percent a week.

The course of wholesale prices since August, 1939, has followed almost exactly the price movements of the equivalent period in the World War. Just as in the World War, these prices show first a rapid rise, then a time of stabilization, then a resumption of an even more rapid movement. In the last war, this movement continued from an index of 149 in October, 1916, to 220 in June, 1917. Although today we have greater powers of control over interest rates, prices and consumption than existed in 1917, the strain which the war effort has placed upon the price level is, if anything, more severe. Our effort has just begun, and already $46,000,000,000 has been appropriated for defense compared with the total appropriations of $31,000,000,000 in the World War.

"We may now be on the edge of credit inflation," Henderson wrote recently, and he is without power even to hold us on the edge.

In the last war, according to Bernard M. Baruch, we wasted $15,000,000,000 because price control was undertaken only after a major inflation had taken place. When we finally declared war, the wild disorder of prices brought our war effort almost to a standstill. Wilson spoke sincerely in July, 1917, when he said: "Prices mean the same thing everywhere now. They mean the efficiency or the inefficiency of the nation . . . they mean victory or defeat."

Price fixing was then undertaken by the War Industries Board until the creation in July, 1918, of the Price Fixing Committee. Like OPACS, the Price Fixing Committee was created as an independent agency under the President because the main agency was so stuffed with business men that any price-fixing activities which it undertook were bound to arouse suspicion.

By bluffing and threatening, Baruch succeeded in forcing some prices below the unheard-of levels which they had reached. But a tremendous amount of profiteering continued and the general-commodity index rose another 37 percent between July, 1917, and November, 1918. "Our partial price fixing did not stop inflation," said Baruch when the war was over. "We checked the rate of inflation but the process still went on."

In his report to the President in 1919 and his testimony before the War Policies Commission in 1931, Baruch stated that the reasons for the failure of wartime price fixing were two: the piecemeal method in which it was undertaken and the lack of any adequate means of enforcement.

Baruch told the Commission that the fixing of a few prices in wartime was basically unsound. "When we reflect that the price of anything is simply the resultant of the price of everything," he said, "it must be clear that in war we cannot justly or practicably halt the rise in the price of anything unless we halt the rise in the price of everything."

On the absence of the power of enforcement in the price-fixing agencies, Baruch was equally emphatic. "It was," he told the Nye Committee, "one of the very reasons why prices were not fixed quicker and why we did not hammer harder than we did. . . . We fixed policies with the aid of potential federal compulsion and we could not have obtained unanimous compliance otherwise." But the "potential federal compulsion" consisted only of the threat to commandeer factories, or to use the power of priorities to deprive violators of raw-material supplies or transportation services. Neither of these threats was logical or effective. In particular, the threat to commandeer was an empty one and the

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copper manufacturers bluntly told the government so. In September, 1917, the War Industries Board did threaten to take over the steel industry. Sixteen years later, in the Nye investigation, Baruch was asked what would have happened "if your bluff had been called." "I would have been in the devil of a fix," he said.

In his testimony before the War Policies Commission, Baruch summed up his entire war experience in recommending the passage in peacetime of a statute giving the government power to stabilize all prices in time of war. In Baruch's statute, a day was to be chosen on which all prices should be deemed fair market prices and it would then be unlawful for anyone to buy or sell at a higher price than the fair market price. The statute contained a penal provision for violations and additional powers of priorities and commandeering. All cases would be open to appeal before the courts, but no price rises would be permitted before evidence had been submitted that the increase was necessary.

If this statute were passed in peacetime, Baruch asserted that it would cut the cost of the war by 50 percent, eliminate war profits and inflation and obtain the earliest possible transition from peace to war and back to peace again.

"If in the next great war we are to be as unfortunate and unskillful as we were in 1917, or so fatuous as to refuse general stabilization and let the normal schedule run away, it is possible to stabilize such prices as have outdistanced the general advance. But that will not stop inflation." In the spring of 1940, this warning of Baruch's rang through the minds of New Deal economists who proposed to Henderson that a statute be sent to Congress. But no action was taken.

Throughout most of 1940 prices remained stable. Early in 1941, however, the acceleration of the defense program and the growing shortages caused a great deal of speculation and hoarding of defense materials. When speculation raised the price of second-hand machine tools purchased by the government above the price of newly manufactured tools, Henderson issued his first schedule creating a fair price for second-hand machine tools. When speculation spread to aluminum, zinc and steel scrap, three further schedules were issued for these commodities. On April 16, an important schedule fixed the fair price of combed yarns below the existing price level. A further schedule held iron and steel prices to existing levels despite substantial wage increases.

Since then further schedules have been issued on hides, coal and other goods. The method of price fixing remains a piecemeal method, however, and the authority for the schedules remains uncertain. The schedules are not termed orders and they do not carry penalties for infraction. Henderson's only powers of enforcement are the threats contained in most schedules fully to inform Congress and the public of any failure to comply, and the old powers of priorities and commandeering. But the power to commandeer has never been used in a case such as this, and the use of priorities bears most heavily upon employees and consumers.

Henderson must be given statutory powers of enforcement if he is to hold prices down. For some time it has been known that bootlegging has been widespread in the scrap markets for which price schedules have been issued. Now this evasion has become open. Even the cotton merchants and manufacturers are talking of coöperating *if* they are given "an equitable settlement." These acts and more are incited by statesmen such as Senator Taft, who has read into the record a brief asserting that Henderson's price fixing is "purely and simply government blackmail." Whether or not Taft is right, the widespread suspicion that he may be in itself creates an intolerable position for Henderson and forces his hand in demanding further power.

Henderson must also be given both statutory power to stabilize all prices, and coöperation of other government agencies which are now working against OPACS, if the powerful forces of inflation are to be held back.

The first of these forces is the defense program itself. Defense production is now cutting into civilian supplies at a time when civilians have more and more money to spend. Automobiles may be cut 40 percent, radios and refrigerators may also be curtailed; then higher overheads will compel price rises, and demand will force prices to far higher levels than are justified by the increased overheads alone. By its refusal to meet this threat by insisting on expansion of production as a condition of priorities, the Priorities Division of the OPM is undermining OPACS and making inflation more certain.

The rapid rise in wages is also beginning to press upon prices. So far, wage increases which, in CIO contracts alone have amounted to $500,000,000, have been absorbed by lower overhead costs as production has expanded. But now that the limits of capacity have been reached in many industries, wage increases are necessarily being passed on in increased prices. Although the unions are opposed to a general inflationary movement, the knowledge that in particular industries the wage increases they are demanding must result in increased prices is not a strong deterrent. So far, the Mediation Board has aided the unions by granting increases in a majority of the forty-four settlements.

Similarly, in foodstuffs, hides and textiles the important farm lobbies and the AAA in the Department of Agriculture have succeeded in forcing through the very high parity payments which make increased farm prices unavoidable. They maintain that farm prices are still 10 percent below World War parity, and they argue that the only way to obtain a higher level of farm production is to pay higher prices for farm products. They favor price stabilization only after inflation has taken place.

In addition to the pressure of labor, farm and industrial interests, Henderson faces the opposition of the special pleaders in Congress. There are the reactionaries who for years have been shouting that govern-

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ment spending would lead to inflation and who are now shouting that an attempt by the government to stop inflation would be an usurpation of power; there are the cotton Senators who want cotton to rise in price "to beat all hell"; there are the Senators from the silver states, who have never objected to a little mild inflation. On June 30, twenty Senators representing these groups met and tore to shreds the notion of price control. The power of these groups led administration leaders in Congress to reject Henderson's plea for a statute, according to a recent leak in The Wall Street Journal. The statute, these leaders told Henderson, "would precipitate a terrific fight in the House now and the administration would do well to postpone action along these lines for some time to come."

If we are not strong enough to fight; if an increase in prices is the precondition of an increase in production, then the future of OPACS is hopeless. But officials of OPACS are not hopeless. They believe that the break-even points in the consumer durable-goods industries are so low that prices need not greatly rise when production is curtailed. They assert that by the use of subsidies, increased farm production can be obtained without a rise in the price of all farm products. Labor, they argue, bargains in most cases within the range set by the price and profit structure of the given situation. If rents are fixed and control of profits, which is the true counterpart to wage control, is seriously undertaken in the enforcement of a genuine excess-profits tax, labor, they maintain, will agree to wage stabilization as a necessary part of effective price control.

And there are the interests of other groups to be remembered: the unorganized workers, the civil servants, the veterans, the soldiers, all whose wages and salaries are immobile, and for whom rising prices mean the lowering of standards, the creation first of bitterness, finally of violent opposition, when inflation makes their hardship unendurable.

But, if action is to be taken, it must be taken soon. Each day lost makes it more difficult to select a fair base, to reduce prices below inflated levels, to disperse newly created vested interests. Meanwhile, we are fighting against ourselves, sapping our own strength and losing not only the war but the peace.

"Prices mean the same thing everywhere now. They mean the efficiency or the inefficiency of the nation. They mean victory or defeat."

*Washington* MICHAEL STRAIGHT

# Shortage in Kilowatts

EVENTS OF RECENT WEEKS have finally made it clear to the public that the country faces a shortage of electricity, but the extent to which this shortage threatens our whole national defense effort is not generally realized. Even if civilian consumption of electricity is severely restricted during the next year or two, deficiencies in power supply are certain to limit the expansion of production in some of our most vital munitions industries.

Hoping to avoid plant expansion, utility officials, like their colleagues in steel, aluminum and other monopolistic industries, have refused to admit the possibility of lack of power, and in their efforts to conceal the truth have resorted to shameless subterfuges. C. W. Kellogg's now famous speech to the convention of the Edison Electric Institute early in June, in which he declared that "an allegation of power shortage is unwarranted," was only one in a long series of attempts by spokesmen for the industry to hide the fact that the restrictive policies pursued in the hope of higher profits have brought about a situation which is so critical that it menaces the country's security. At the time of his speech, Kellogg was not only president of the Edison Institute and sometime chairman of the board of Engineers' Public Service Company, one of the utility holding companies which has bitterly fought SEC regulation, but also "consultant on heat, light and power" to the OPM. Heaven be praised he is no longer the latter (The New Republic of July 7).

The story of the shortage of electric power is buried in the charts and statistics of the Federal Power Commission. It constitutes a damning indictment of the utility industry. At the same time, it reveals that the FPC has shown little foresight and less aggressiveness in doing the work assigned to it by President Roosevelt when the defense program was undertaken in the spring of 1940—to anticipate and to recommend action to prevent the development of power-supply bottlenecks. More than a year ago the Commission set up a National Defense Power Staff whose sole duty it was to do this job. With the shortage now upon us, the Commission has at last begun to act. But a broad program to deal with the situation has yet to be announced.

The peak demand for electricity in 1940 (Class I utilities, including both public and private plants) was a little less than 28,000,000 kilowatts. In its most recent report, made public in mid-June, the FPC estimates the peak demand for 1941 at 34,000,000 kilowatts, and the peak demand for 1942 at 37,000,000. On the basis of these estimates, the utilities must prepare for an increased demand amounting to 6,000,000 kilowatts this year and an additional 3,000,000 next year.

As might be expected, the utilities consider the government estimates much too high. In their own reports to the Commission, they forecast a maximum demand of 30,500,000 kilowatts for 1941 and 31,000,000 for 1942—an increase by 1942 of 3,000,000 kilowatts over 1940's peak demand, or only one-third of the increase

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predicted by the Commission. In the same reports, however, the utilities reveal that they are planning additions to generating capacity amounting to a total of 6,500,000 kilowatts in 1941 and 1942. This gives away their hand. It is inconceivable that they would prepare for a peak demand of nearly 35,000,000 kilowatts in 1942 if they took their own estimate of 31,000,000 seriously.

Actually, the peak demand by the end of 1942 is likely to be, not 31,000,000 kilowatts, as estimated by the utilities, nor 37,000,000, as estimated by the Power Commission in its published reports, but considerably more than 40,000,000. The Commission itself is well aware of this possibility. It has been careful to point out that its own estimates are subject to revision from day to day. In its June report, it observes that "the defense program has been expanded so rapidly that estimates of future load cannot be kept completely up-to-date."

On June 5, Leland Olds, chairman of the Commission, estimated that from 10,000,000 to 16,000,000 kilowatts of additional electric capacity would be needed to permit defense industries to attain maximum production with manpower now available. This meant that if full employment were reached by the end of 1942, the expansion of industry alone would increase the demand to between 38,000,000 and 44,000,000 kilowatts, and that the total demand would be still higher because of the growth in domestic consumption resulting from a rising national income. Less than three weeks later Olds again revised his figures upward. Appearing, on June 23, before the House Rivers and Harbors Committee in support of the St. Lawrence seaway and power project, he declared that the additional capacity needed to enable this country to match Germany's production of war materials amounted to from 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 kilowatts. This would increase the total demand to be planned for to nearly 50,000,000.

That the need for power may reach 45,000,000 to 50,000,000 kilowatts by the end of next year is by no means improbable. To produce 1,600,000,000 pounds of aluminum—the minimum amount which the OPM estimates is needed next year for military purposes—alone would require 2,300,000 kilowatts of capacity.

The chance that we will be prepared by next year to meet a peak demand of 40,000,000 kilowatts—much less 45,000,000 or 50,000,000—is remote. Although Kellogg told the Edison Institute convention that additions to capacity planned by the industry for 1941 and 1942 totaled 7,500,000 kilowatts, the utilities themselves reported to the FPC that scheduled new capacity amounted to about 6,500,000 kilowatts—3,400,000 in 1941 and 3,100,000 in 1942. If planned additions were made on schedule, the utilities would be able to meet a peak demand of 35,500,000 kilowatts by 1942. Actually, however, much of the generating equipment will not be delivered by the end of next year.

The production of turbines and generators for steam-power plants is one of the most critical bottlenecks of the entire defense program. Roughly two-thirds of the electricity produced in the United States is generated by steam plants and one-third by hydro plants. Three companies—Allis Chalmers, General Electric and Westinghouse—produce all of the turbines suitable for major steam-power plant expansion. In addition they manufacture most of the steam turbines that drive American ships. Because of the extraordinary demands of our naval and merchant shipbuilding program, and because of shortages of machine tools and materials like steel forgings, all three of these companies are far behind on deliveries. Production at Allis Chalmers was further delayed by the protracted strike last spring. Deliveries for 1941 will be at least four months late.

Under any circumstances the production of generating equipment is a difficult and time-consuming job. For example, a machine tool known as a boring mill, used to finish the inside of turbine casings, may be tied up as long as six months turning out a single casing. Under ordinary conditions orders for generating equipment must be placed eighteen months ahead. Under present conditions orders placed now could not be filled for from thirty to thirty-six months.

Total production of steam turbines for public utilities is estimated at about 4,000,000 kilowatts during the next two years. In addition to this steam capacity, some 1,250,000 kilowatts of hydroelectric capacity—most of it at the TVA, Bonneville, Grand Coulee and Boulder Dam—is scheduled for installation by the end of next year. Some additions to capacity can be made also without installing new generators—by bringing present turbines and generators up to capacity through increases in boiler and condenser capacity. It is unlikely, however, that total additions to capacity by the end of 1942 will exceed 5,500,000 kilowatts. By adding this new capacity the utilities can meet a demand of about 34,500,000 kilowatts.

With a peak demand next year of 37,000,000 kilowatts—the present published estimate of the FPC—the shortage at that time would amount to 2,500,000 kilowatts. If, as is likely, total power requirements should rise above 45,000,000, the shortage would amount to at least 10,500,000 kilowatts. This amount of generating capacity would have supplied more than the entire demand for electricity by residential consumers in 1940. Compared with a shortage of this magnitude, savings of an estimated 350,000 kilowatts from a twelve-month system of daylight time would be minute indeed.

In rationing blame for the shortage it is only fair to say that utility officials were in no better position than anyone else to foresee the enormous production program of the government and the resultant growth in power demands. The private-utility industry is to be blamed, however, for pursuing policies for a quarter of a century which made it difficult to produce additional power once the need for it became apparent. It is to be blamed also for refusing to admit the need for a large expansion of capacity months ago, when the broad

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scope of the defense program became clear, and for failing to discard immediately the restrictive policies which obstructed such an expansion. The industry is to be condemned for its efforts to cover up its own shortcomings by false statements to the public and phony reports on capacity and reserves to the Federal Power Commission. These latter sins come close to treason.

Experience of the TVA and its competitor, the Alabama Power Company, demonstrates that utilities can increase profits by reducing rates and increasing consumption of electricity. A 55-percent reduction in rates brought about a 252-percent increase in residential consumption in Tupelo, Mississippi, after the TVA began supplying the town with electric energy. Nevertheless, most of the private utilities have continued to operate on the theory that maximum earnings come from high rates on a small volume of business. They have opposed expansion during the war emergency because they feared that "excess capacity" after the war would threaten dividend payments.

The policy of resistance to expansion—at whatever cost to the nation's security—has been dictated, not by the operating personnel in the industry, but by the financial interests which control utility holding companies. In a recent forthright speech to the Edison Institute convention, Edward C. Eicher, chairman of the SEC, pointed out that "It might be fatal to our national existence if we should experience the power shortages of the last World War." In some respects, he said, the task of providing adequate power for industry is more difficult now than it was then. "Prior to 1914, few holding-company systems had been created. . . . In the last World War, the problems of the increased needs of power were solved primarily by true operating men whose interest was in production for service. Today, the problem is complicated by the fact that the front-line operating men—those who really know the down-to-the-earth defense power needs of their own communities—are powerless to make decisions. The decisions must come from distant holding-company executives who at best are only remotely familiar with particular power problems and who at worst are selfishly refusing to do anything which they fear might weaken their own stranglehold on a scattered system."

An analysis of the recent reports of the utilities to the FPC provides additional evidence that the private power companies have no hesitation in subordinating the country's interests to profit-seeking. Besides grossly underestimating future demand, these companies have doctored up their figures on capacity and reserves, in an effort still further to conceal the desperate need for expansion of plant. Between September, 1940, and March, 1941, the utilities increased their reported "net assured capacity" some 500,000 kilowatts by the simple expedient of reducing their reported "required reserves" by a like amount. This brought a mild reproof from the FPC: "It is of course obvious that assigning higher values of dependable capacities to existing facilities and also decreasing available operating reserves are only apparent additions to the generating capacity of the country and do not represent real increases. Such practices, if carried beyond sound judgment, may prove dangerous to the defense program and inimical to the best interests of the country."

The timidity of the FPC in dealing with the utilities is of less moment than its shortsightedness and procrastination in dealing with the power shortage itself. The Commission's National Defense Power Staff not only failed to propose definite measures for meeting such shortages as were foreseen, but, most important of all, it failed months ago to impress upon the public and upon Congress the fact that these shortages would be serious and that effective action should be taken immediately to forestall them. Figures in the Commission's monthly reports were listed according to geographical areas; no total figures to show the power situation in the country as a whole were given. Since the story could only be pieced together with the aid of an adding machine, it escaped public notice until the effects of actual shortages recently began to be felt.

Whatever the mistakes of the past, however, the important thing is to act now to remedy them. First, we should devise methods of expanding and speeding up our output of steam turbines and generators. Second, we should immediately begin to build hydroelectric plants at suitable sites throughout the country. The bottleneck in the manufacture of hydraulic generating equipment is less serious than the bottleneck in steam-turbine production. Five companies manufacture hydroturbines and generators—including Allis Chalmers, which builds both steam and hydraulic equipment. Not all of these manufacturers are now working at capacity. If equipment orders were placed now, it might be possible to make hydro power available in a number of places in two years or less. Construction of the proposed St. Lawrence hydroelectric development should be authorized without delay. This project probably would take four years to complete, but its capacity would be second only to Grand Coulee. Third, we should extend interconnections between power systems, in order to increase the dependability of existing power supplies.[1] Such transmission lines would serve to reduce the amount of capacity that must now be kept in reserve for equipment breakdowns, and would make it possible to supply some deficient areas with surplus power from other regions. Fourth, new defense industries should be located, and defense contracts allocated, with an eye to present and future power supplies. Finally, non-defense uses of power should be rationed where necessary.

If we take these steps at once, and all others that ingenuity can devise, we can reduce the shortage in kilowatts. If we fail to take them, defense production will be stalled.

BRYANT PUTNEY

[1] The Federal Power Commission's order creating a seventeen-state power pool is a first step toward providing such interconnections.

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# Between Life and Death: The Viruses

OF THE MANY REMARKABLE QUESTS OF SCIENCE at this moment few are more exciting or more dramatic in the promise they hold out to mankind than research among the viruses. Although it has received comparatively little attention from the general public, continuous progress has been made in this field in the past few years—more than in the entire previous history of science. Some of the results that are being achieved are:

1. Important light is being thrown on some of the most deadly diseases with which men, animals and plants are afflicted, and progress is being made in preventing them or in reducing their seriousness.

2. Recent discoveries are offering valuable clues to the nature of certain other diseases not heretofore believed to be of virus origin, with the hope that, when they are understood, they can be brought under control.

3. Through newly discovered facts, we are getting a fresh view of evolutionary principles. The science of chemistry and that of genetics are being brought close together and woven into one pattern.

4. As a result of all this, a new philosophical concept is emerging in which the old distinctions between organic and inorganic matter, between molecules and organisms, between "the living" and "the dead," are disappearing and the entire universe and everything in it seem to be in one orderly, logical and closely related whole. (This idea, to be sure, had been suggested by philosophers thousands of years ago, but not until now have we had definite proof to back it up.)

The viruses, as most people know, are disease-producing "somethings" that are exceedingly minute. For many years they were thought to be unusually small microörganisms or bacteria, so small in fact that they could not be seen, and their actual existence had to be deduced from their activity. It is only within the past few months, since the coming of the wonderful new tool, the electron microscope, that it has been possible to "micrograph," or to obtain pictures of, viruses in action. Most of them are so small that the usual bacteriological filter does not hold them, and they are therefore commonly known as the "filterable viruses."

These viruses cause a long list of deadly diseases. Among these are various forms of infantile paralysis and sleeping sickness. Smallpox is a virus disease, and so are yellow fever, rabies, hog cholera, the hoof-and-mouth disease in cattle, distemper in dogs and the parrot disease, psittacosis. Some forms of tumor and cancer are virus-caused. Diseases which are usually milder, though they can occasionally become extremely serious, are influenza, chicken-pox and measles. Fever blisters are a trifling affliction in mankind, but when the virus is isolated and animals are infected with it, it can be fatal. At least eleven viruses are known which attack the nervous system in man. Others wreak great damage in the world of plants. The mosaic diseases, of which tobacco mosaic is one of the best known, can attack forty-eight species of plants, scattered through fourteen families. In many cases they ruin commercial crops.

Oddly enough, ways of dealing with some of the deadliest virus diseases were evolved many decades before anything was known of the viruses themselves. Man, and all other organisms having bloodstreams, have the faculty of creating antibodies which fight invading disease agents. Sometimes the disease wins and the victim may die; sometimes the antibodies win, and when this happens, the individual gets well and usually has immunity for a varying period of time. Vaccination consists either in creating a mild case of a disease to bring about immunity or in transferring existing immunity from one organism to another. (Sometimes, in the case of bacteria, dead ones will call antibodies into existence as well as living ones, and without danger of a serious case of the disease.)

Fortunately for mankind, many viruses possess a remarkable quality. When they are transplanted from one host to another, they lose much of their malignance toward the first host, and can safely be used for immunizing purposes. Thus the yellow-fever virus, now being fought effectively, especially in the tropics of the Western Hemisphere, is weakened down by being passed through the brain of a mouse (and is thereafter kept alive for vaccine purposes, through inoculation of an unborn chick in its shell). It was 145 years ago that Edward Jenner discovered that English milkmaids who had cowpox infections on their hands were immune to smallpox, and successfully introduced vaccination based on this fact. The cowpox causes in its secondary host, the human being, a slight reaction but bestows immunity for a considerable period of time to the very dangerous virus of smallpox. The next great figure in the history of virus work is Louis Pasteur, who more than fifty years ago treated with the vaccine technique rabies implanted in human beings by the bite of a dog with hydrophobia.

One of the great turning points in the history of science came only six years ago when Dr. W. M. Stanley, a brilliant young research expert of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, succeeded for the first time in history in chemically isolating a virus in pure form. The one he took for his experiment was that causing the tobacco-mosaic disease, not because he had any special interest in tobacco or its diseases, but because this one responded readily to laboratory techniques. We are only now beginning to understand the breathtaking new vistas that were opened up by these researches.

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The technique of extracting a virus in pure form sounds simple, though in the beginning it was fraught with great difficulties. Leaves of the tobacco plant are ground up, and the juice is pressed from the "mash." It is then placed in a centrifuge, a device containing a chamber which rotates at tremendously high speed, up to 100,000 times a minute, although viruses can be obtained at less than this. The rotary motion brings into play centrifugal force; the heavy molecules of the virus are thrust outward in the rotating liquid, and can be separated off.

Dr. Stanley not only succeeded in isolating the pure virus, but in producing it in crystalline form. To the layman, this fact suggests that viruses must be "dead," since it is hard to imagine a living organism appearing in the form of inert, motionless crystals. The scientist, however, knows that this distinction between the living and the dead is less important than it seems. Certainly, the crystals of tobacco-mosaic virus can on occasion "come to life" to the most astonishing extent. At present, about twenty viruses have been isolated in pure form and four have been crystallized. They are tobacco mosaic and tobacco necrosis, the "bushy-stunt" disease in tomatoes, and the cucumber-mosaic disease.

Having the virus isolated in pure form has been of enormous advantage to science. It is now possible to "manufacture" virus in quite large quantities so that it is available to scientists everywhere for all sorts of experiments. The virus in this form has aided Dr. Stanley and his colleagues in their own work on virus reproduction and in studying the way in which the disease attacks various plants.

So far as science knows, a virus particle is a single protein molecule; a molecule is of course the smallest possible unit of matter larger than the atom. It is made up of atoms in an exact order which never varies for two molecules of the same substance but varies enormously between one substance and another.

A long and on the whole fruitless discussion has been conducted on the question mentioned above, whether a virus is alive or dead. Ordinarily, living matter is supposedly made up of cells with walls; there is no evidence that viruses possess such a quality, but definite cell walls are also lacking among certain slime molds that are ordinarily classed among living things. Again, we have no evidence that viruses breathe; but this is equally true of some living substances. Viruses are certainly small (though the largest known ones are about thirty times bigger than the smallest), but some viruses are actually larger than some known organisms.

One quality of the virus which makes it seem alive is its power to reproduce itself. Brought into contact with suitable forms of living cells, the virus molecules instantly leap into action. Operating within the cells of their involuntary host, they duplicate themselves until from a single virus entity you may have billions. No such action takes place in the test tube when the virus is isolated alone. No such action takes place when the virus is in contact with a non-susceptible host, or with dead cells. Only when given exactly the right conditions does the minute particle exhibit this astonishing characteristic of the power of reproduction, limited only by the amount of the tissues upon which it can seize.

How is this miracle accomplished? The scientists believe that the virus molecule consists of a combination of various chemical elements in extremely minute quantities. The virus is somehow able to commandeer from the host cell exactly the same amounts of exactly the same chemicals, and to arrange these in an order duplicating that of the original molecule. Each of these two molecules then calls into being another in the same way. The four become eight; the eight become sixteen, and so on into billions. In the last analysis, the force by which the virus molecule can summon forth from the host cell the materials for its own exact counterpart must finally be electric, since electricity is the underlying principle of the atom; but just how the operation of virus-synthesis is performed, we do not know.

The virus has another highly important characteristic of living organisms: it mutates. As the virus particles multiply, a small proportion of them change their character, and pass the change along to their "descendants." In this way a deadly disease can arise from a harmless one, or vice versa. The grave character of the influenza epidemic of 1918 was probably due to a mutation in the influenza virus which started somewhere and spread throughout the world. At certain times, measles is more serious than it is at others, for the same reason. If we knew enough about the measles virus, we could watch the rise and fall of malignancy and when the disease was of a particularly mild variety, we could expose as many children as possible and let them get permanent immunity with minimum danger.

Normally, mutation occurs in only a small proportion of the virus molecules that are being created; but as suggested above, passing a virus from one host to another in many instances changes its character materially. Usually this change is a modification downward of the virus' power; or as the scientists say, it becomes "avirulent." It is possible, indeed, for a virus to be so mild in its effects that it produces no symptoms whatever in a given host, and its presence can only be determined by inoculation to a new type of host or by means of isolation techniques. On the other hand, such a "benignant virus" might turn savage again through mutation or through transference to another host. It is necessary to think of the viruses as changeable in characteristics to the last degree—appearing, disappearing, becoming stronger or weaker, committing suicide through destroying their host or possibly benefiting him in ways not yet suspected.

One of the most astonishing chapters in the new story of the virus as it is now being unrolled is its resemblance to the gene. All human life and the life of all other animals and of plants as we usually recognize it consists of cells; these cells contain, in their nucleus,

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the chromosomes, in unvarying numbers in each species, and the chromosomes contain genes which determine the physical characteristics and the whole life pattern of the organism. So far as science now knows, a gene is a single protein molecule. The scientist calls it a nucleoprotein, to indicate a systematic arrangement, which in this case is in fact exceedingly complex. But a virus particle may also be a single nucleoprotein molecule of highly complex structure. It is hard to believe that any two objects in nature can be so closely identical without having a definite and vital relationship to one another. It has been suggested that a virus may indeed be a gene that has somehow broken loose from its surroundings and controlling structure. Does this seem too fantastic for belief? If it does, think how hard it would have been to believe almost any of the facts set out above, before Dr. Stanley's historic research.

Important developments are coming from the laboratories at present in relation to some of the virus diseases. For example, a successful vaccine has recently been prepared for a variety of sleeping sickness which until a short time ago affected only horses but is now known to attack human beings. The vaccine for yellow fever, already mentioned, is combating what seems to be a new form of the disease and one not necessarily carried by mosquitoes, like the earlier type. Encouraging results have been found in vaccines for influenza, though this problem is complicated by the discovery that there are a number of influenzas each of which requires special consideration. A great deal of work has been done in regard to infantile paralysis, although some of the lines followed have proved less valuable than was at first expected. Very recent studies indicate that the commoner forms of infantile paralysis enter the system, not through the nasal membranes as was formerly believed, but through the mouth, whence they are carried to the intestines, spreading from there to the nervous system. Broadly speaking, all virus research is useful in connection with every one of the diseases, since the best hope of meeting any illness is to understand it.

A remarkable recent development is the news that the same virus can exist and increase in both a plant and an animal. Work done in Japan on the "rice-stunt" virus and in the United States on the "aster-yellow" virus indicates that viruses heretofore known to multiply only in plants can also multiply in insects—which is to say, in animals. The barriers between plant and animal viruses are now down—even though the scientists have not yet succeeded in reversing the process and growing an animal virus in a plant. This important discovery reëmphasizes the value of studying plant viruses, which are so readily handled nowadays, in seeking to prevent or cure virus diseases in animals and men.

There is a striking similarity between the way in which virus molecules reproduce themselves and the proliferation of cells in cancer. As far as science now knows, cancer is in most cases simply a healthy cell or group of them that begin to duplicate themselves and are unable to halt—just as the viruses do. In normal life, cells continue to grow until an adequate number of them have been created and then stop; a growth-inhibiting factor is present to tell them when their work is completed. Not only do the viruses proliferate in a wild fashion, but in certain cases they stimulate their host cells to multiply in the same way. Sometimes, indeed, there is apparently a struggle for survival among two or more types of virus, and the one that is stronger and better adapted to its environment destroys the other by taking away the major portion of the available "food"—the chemicals in the host cell.

As stated above, it is now known that certain types of cancer are caused by viruses. Moreover, very recent researches seem to indicate that at least one type of cancer hitherto thought to be hereditary may result from a virus and be transmitted from a mammalian mother to her offspring in her milk. Laboratory mice have passed along what appeared to be hereditary cancer through many generations. Experimenters have discovered, however, that if they took away the newborn baby mice before they had had time to drink any of the mother's milk, and gave them a healthy foster mother, they did not usually develop cancer of this supposedly hereditary type. On the other hand, a large proportion of baby mice of a healthy strain, drinking the milk of a foster mother with this type of cancer, promptly developed the same disease. (These experiments refer to an unusual form of the disease in mice, and there is no reason as yet for human beings to change their normal routine because of them.)

The virus and the gene are tied together in one specific close relationship. All sorts of organisms are immune to the action of all sorts of viruses in varying degrees at varying times, as already suggested. But this immunity is not entirely due to mutations in the virus itself. It may be due to genetic factors. The man who boasts that he never catches cold, and that he inherited this characteristic from his father, may actually be right.

One of the great underlying phenomena of nature is catalysis. A catalyst is a chemical agent which speeds up a reaction between or among other chemicals without itself being altered in the process. Since in many cases this reaction would not have taken place within measurable time unless the catalyst were present, it is fair to say for practical purposes that the catalyst creates the chemical action. A thing which influences, or causes the reproduction of, itself is called an autocatalyst. Autocatalysis is usually the property of living organisms, though some simple chemicals have this power. A virus is an autocatalyst; so is a gene. In all cases of catalysis, however, an extremely slight change in the catalytic agent can produce an enormous change in the product upon which it works. Correspondingly, autocatalysis is not possible, in the virus, unless exactly the right chemicals are present in exactly the right amount. This is why the viruses refuse to grow in the test tube, or in the cells of the wrong host, or in dead cells. In

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each of these cases, some one or more of the necessary chemical elements are either absent, or are present in the wrong proportion or are otherwise ineffective. The viruses are also affected, and usually rendered inactive, by certain external agencies, such as acids, alkalies, urea or heat. They are influenced, but in less degree, by ultraviolet light, hydrogen peroxide and other things. In case you are interested, the molecule of the tobacco-mosaic virus consists of 50-percent carbon, 16-percent nitrogen, 7.5-percent hydrogen and small amounts of sulphur and phosphorus.

The outstanding result of the recent work on the viruses is to break down the distinction between organisms and molecules, or the living and the dead. Until this work was done, science had a habit of saying that there were two worlds of matter and that the boundary between them could not be crossed. But the viruses cross that boundary, or more accurately, they have settled down as squatters upon it. In some of their characteristics, they seem like pure chemicals; in others, they seem like pure organisms. That is why scientists today insist that the old distinction is an artificial and meaningless one. As Dr. Stanley said in his address this year accepting the Gold Medal of the American Institute of the City of New York: "It is difficult, if not impossible, to place a sharp line separating living from non-living things when one considers a series of structures of gradually increasing complexity such as would be represented by hydrogen, water, benzene, ergosterol, egg albumin, insulin, pepsin, tobacco-mosaic virus, papilloma virus, vaccine virus, pleuro-pneumonia organism, bacteria, a mammal like a dog and intervening entities. . . . I believe that the work on viruses has provided us with new reasons for considering that life as we know it owes its existence to a specific state of matter and that the principle of the vital phenomenon does not come into existence suddenly but is inherent in all matter." That is to say, there is no line that can be drawn with the statement, "on one side is life and on the other side is non-life." The most that can be said is that there is a condition which might be called pre-life; this shades over by what seem to be imperceptible degrees into life. It seems probable that the more we know, the more gradual this shift will appear to be.

If this statement is correct, the year 1935, the beginning of true virus research, may become one of the little handful of dates which mark the great turning points in the history of human thought. But even if this should not prove true, the fact remains that the virus research is giving us another important group of weapons in man's unceasing but steadily victorious struggle for control of his environment.

BRUCE BLIVEN

*This is one of a series of articles under the general title, "The Men Who Make the Future," based on interviews with leading scientists.* – THE EDITORS

# To the Promissory Land

## I: *"NY to LA"*

EVERY WEEK in Variety you will find two boxes of names, twenty or thirty names of show people to the box. One list is headed "LA to NY," and those are the arrivals; the other is the one of departures, "NY to LA." All year long, back and forth across the country, the people shuttle between the capital of the films and the capital of almost everything else. Those who aren't buying a car in the East because it's much cheaper, and driving out, go West in two ways (1) plane (2) rail. To one who was ever moved by the far mumbled poetry of the train caller, ". . . Albany and the West," there will be no joining the airplane crowd when the chance comes. What is there up in a plane? A lot of air. And the Twentieth Century Limited goes to Albany and the West.

Every day of the year the Twentieth Century out of New York makes up in the Mott Haven yards and is brought down to Grand Central thirty minutes before train time, stocked with food and fuel, beds made and rooms ready, to wait quietly beside its red carpet with that mysterious air of power and destiny trains always have in their dim stations. Every night at six sharp, with its passengers sorted and shuffled and hustled aboard and goodbye goodbye goodbye, the engine picks its long string of cars up as gently as a cat and moves out over the switches, gathering its speed past the swarming commuter trains in the underground maze, rolling through the usual jerk and halt of 125th Street as though on a billiard table, and when the blocks are clear ahead settling into the pull up the high main line to Harmon. At Harmon, all steam and floodlights and engines released or ready and waiting, and other wonderful things, there is a leaning back and slowing to a first stop hardly noticed in the diners, the lounge and observation cars, the trim quiet rooms, compartments, suites; but at Harmon the rightful steam engine for this train backs into the coupling, the Hudson-type locomotive with driving wheels over your head, with all the hot shining roar and promise of all the steam engines ever dreamed of; and in less than four minutes and with no jar, the station is gathering speed backward and the train is picking up again on the long way, cuffing small towns aside too quickly for you to read the names on the station signs, and grudg-

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ing more than the few minutes for mail at Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo. And the West.

It gets late up around Buffalo, and the after-section of the observation car has the lights out, so that there is nothing but curved glass between the soft chair and the running iron of the track down its maze of signal lights, nothing inside but the glow of a cigarette and the big speedometer on the forward wall, with its deliberate needle swinging up to eighty when The Man is seven seconds behind or holding at seventy-five when he is even, or dropping down to thirty-five, twenty-five, twenty as he goes through a coaling stop for all the lesser trains. Around Buffalo, the night is full of trains, passing on the down track in a 150-mile-an-hour flash and blur. The conductor is sitting back there, winking with his flashlight as we pass the lonely men in the signal towers and watching their cheery answer a mile and two miles down the track; he calls off the trains passing and those coming up behind. The Pacemaker is up ahead; #27 and the Wolverine and later #19 are following us in. And the blurs we see, or rather feel as they pass, are the opposite numbers to these specials and will pass them just as we will catch our own opposite number, the Twentieth Century out of Chicago, just clearing Buffalo—all the trains in the night, the freights too, the long manifests. It is late and the lights are out in the houses, no crowds wait in the stations and there are few cars where roads follow the tracks. But it seems as if the whole country were busy at some monstrous and endless game of puss-in-the-corner, and you get into a bed that will be remade and ready again by four of the next afternoon, waiting in Chicago for the next restless American, bound for New York and his next morning's breakfast.

Skip Chicago: it is a rather sad and very dusty place, full of ruins and sudden wind. But the crack train leaves from the Dearborn Station there in the evening, #17, lv. Chicago Tues. & Sat. PM 7:15. That is the Superchief, the streamliner, the mile-eater over the mountains and across the big states. Its long cars fit smoothly together and are done in silver like the gates of heaven, with an engine half a block long to match. Abandon thoughts of smoothness, however: the cars are an older and more rattly model than those of the Century, and you are not long under way before you know that the Santa Fe roadbed—the home of the Superduper—was probably built by Errol Flynn, as the movie suggested, and out of old washboards. For time, distance and natural obstacles encountered, I suppose this is our national crack train, but its full speed is often something like traveling a hundred miles an hour on a pogo stick.

The first night out of Chicago it is all black outside and whole areas of history and legend hang on the thumbtack of a rare station sign caught through the window. All night across Illinois and Missouri, across the rivers and cutting the corner of Iowa, rattling down and across the whole state of Kansas all night. This is the straight and fast part of the run, and you wake up in Colorado fourteen hours after leaving, a great leap in the dark.

The Colorado part of it, in the early spring and in the sunshine, is the nicest morning, because the train is getting into the mountains, doubling around on itself and hugging the rock walls, and there is a dazzle of snow. Up to the high point of the line, the Raton tunnel at 7,600 feet, and into New Mexico by lunchtime, and then down the crazy single track and climbing and twisting again for hours, and into Albuquerque and the late afternoon heat. There is nothing like the state of New Mexico; and its sullen reds and immovable distances are outside the windows until the sun goes down; they will not leave you alone with a book.

This is the late afternoon for passing—the Chief, El Capitan, the Superchief, all eastbound—but there is no swarming of trains out here, and we pass the others waiting for us by appointment along the rare stretches of double track. The train has worked twice as hard the second thirteen or fourteen hours to gain a third of the distance of the first, and pulling upgrade again toward Flagstaff late that night, the whistle for the towns ahead seems tired and a little cross. The club car and lounge and observation cars are deserted (the three movie stars yawned and went off to bed early, which made a clean sweep of everything). The doors up and down the train are closed and the curtains drawn; the lights streaking along the ballast beside the track are winking out; there is nothing but Arizona beside the window, gray and jagged under a bright moon. The only difference is in whether the engine is going upgrade, suddenly fantastic in the moonlight as it doubles the curve, or going down the other side, rocking and roaring. The gray is always the same, with a touch of green and unreal in it like something from "Fantasia." There are many airplane beacons through here, swinging over the horizon ahead and behind and giving the effect among those arid hills of lighthouses along a coastline of shoals. But it goes on hour after hour, the limitless monotony too heavy for heavy sleep after you have been watching for hours, and you rouse up several times to look out and see it still there and the same. This night, trains and motion are unreal and there is only the placid vastness of a continent, impervious to the scratch in its side of all attempts at coast to coast, and time sleeps. All this speed and thunder falls gradually into its temporal perspective, and America takes your breath away at last.

You waken in the sun to find the main streets of towns looking in at you: orange orchards and growth everywhere so lush that plants learn no fear of trains and brush along the sides on a wide curve. Easily downhill through the California groves into Los Angeles, and that stillness of the end of the run, never believable at once, and you step out into a sun you have gained three hours on in three days. The Los Angeles station is all straight wide walks and curves, clean walls and

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air. It is a little like a cake run up by Sutter's for an Italian wedding, but it is also probably the most sweet and restful terminal in the world.

Otherwise coming in is like coming into any other big town: there are streets, taxis, drugstores, Wrigley signs and natives going about their business. You should not expect to find Cecil B. De Mille directing traffic—though that would not be a bad idea. This is the town where millions are squandered and movies made, of course, but the main thing is that people live here and have things to do, and babies, and it is they and their cars that are in the streets their houses make, it is to them that the radios, billboards and papers at the corner stand appeal in the common language to drink Coca-Cola and smoke Chesterfields and demand Esso. Spyros Skouras we are here—but there is nothing so strange. We speak the language and know the folks; being Americans, we have been here before.

*Hollywood Is a State of Mind.*—Of any place it is best to expect nothing, having believed nothing; and there can hardly be a place in the world of which this is more true than it is of Hollywood. Hollywood is a state of mind—but whose? Where did he get it? What's he selling? Who insulted him or gave him the key to Ciro's or failed to recognize him or gave him a hotfoot? If it's Niven Busch writing a comprehensive study of Darryl Zanuck for that comprehensive magazine Life, does anybody check up on how many more screen originals Mr. Busch will sell Mr. Zanuck for the coming year? What visiting reviewers were tossed parties; what reviewer too big for his shoes got what he thought was a contract to take over production and then tossed in a blanket? What austere poets and lowly clowns, what raft of ever vocal literary tourists, have come through to turn over a few odd rocks and report Hollywood to the world?

Every new soul coming in actually brings his own Hollywood with him. Since it is a rather vast place, of many different levels, he can usually manage to keep it, too. There are special reasons. People bring many wide-eyed expectations when they first come to New York, but they never dream of asking New York to be *them:* when the expectation patently doesn't fit, they simply change it. Nobody could spend a week in New York at the house of friends—maybe a Greenwich Village trap, maybe the home of a publisher, maybe folks in Jackson Heights or Brooklyn or Rahway—and write a solemn, thumping article, "The Real New York," and expect to get out with his skin. But Los Angeles as it is today is still raw and recent; and its movie industry has been only too willing to build it up as the place where you can't believe what you see.

The days of look-at-me-I'm-a-legitimate-crazy are as dead out there as Minetta Street bohemia, but they were sold at the time, and oversold. They made publicity of a sort, but they made better copy. And since Hollywood is actually the state of mind of the whole country peering at and reading about it, you might say that copy made it what it isn't today, a great incessant flood of millions of words a year. Most of it is boob writing; most of it is just plain made-up and badly; an influential fraction has been worked up by deep brows in search of something beneath them. It is nonsense. But it has spread out through the nation with its effect, and spread back again to the town itself, with subtle irony. In Los Angeles you will find people who understand and secretly love the place keeping up a front of jibes about it, as the thing expected of anybody who knows. And surely there is nothing more pathetic than the Hollywood intellectual who is positively voracious for the life of the highbrow magazines, having come as near the actual literary racket as rejection slips will allow, and who must show at any expense that the thing is so vulgar to him he can't even *spit.*

To people back in the country, focusing attention or at least honest curiosity on this second American capital of the arts, there must still be a few puzzling things about the whole business. What and where is Hollywood, exactly, and how much is it different from anything known in everyday living? Due partly to circumstance and partly to clever work on the part of the Chamber of Commerce, Hollywood is generically the state of making movies—not only in the imagination of the rest of the country but right on the spot, where the term "that's Hollywood for you" is about as vague, philosophical and ironic as the old *c'est la guerre,* and may be applied equally to news that the girl got married and then had the baby afterwards as to word that some column cut-up had rolled his car into the lobby of a hotel only to find it was a filling station after all.

Exactly and geographically, Hollywood is one of the several suburbs which make up the city of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles is the place which has been summed up as seven suburbs in search of a city. Some of the centers of amusement, victualing and hurrah are located in the area of Hollywood proper; a lot more are not. The corner made by Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street, where celebrities and hot events are usually observed by columnists, looks on an average night something like Times Square by daylight, being frequented by actors out of work, tourists, the usual local types and columnists. Some of the major studios are also in Hollywood; but it is no more a production center than an amusement center, for the outfits of Fox, MGM, Warners, Universal and Disney are scattered all to hell out from any center at all. Los Angeles is the place as a whole, but since we have to have some word for it, we can refer to it as Hollywood when we mean the place where movies are made.

Even statistically, the town is not quite like anything else. I suppose if you took all of Manhattan and called it Downtown Los Angeles, and then distributed the bulk of the active city life around through Westchester, southern Connecticut, Long Island, lower New York State and the east Jersey shore, you would have

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part of the idea. Except that everything is contiguous, there is no clean sense of passage *through* (there is a godly clear sense of passage itself, as everything is quite a long way from everything else); and the words suburb and commuting are not heard, save possibly in colorful invective. In its present size it is a city made by the movies, those who work in them, those who work to support those who work in them, and so on down the line. And the movies are all over the place, in this suburb, in that suburb. The suburbs have simply taken it away and become the city.

It is one of the powerfully big cities by now. The Los Angeles telephone book is about the size of the Manhattan directory; the total population is whatever the figures show. And for length and width there is nothing anywhere like it, in terms of solid square miles of streets and houses, streets and houses, stores and theatres and then more blocks of houses, all built up and kept up, owned and cared for. The chance for parking anywhere is better than in any big city, because there is always a lot that was held for a higher price until the boom had passed over into the next section; but always you have this feeling of even, steady knitting, loose for comfort but no stitches dropped. And it goes on everywhere, every day, and quick, so that if you catch an empty corner and a cinder in your eye at the same time, you will be an anachronism by the time you get seeing clearly again, because fourteen lath-and-plasterers have got the first story of a house up there and knocked off to have a drink with the first tenant.

And that is about all you see at once, the whole place lying clean and limitless in the sun. To the north are the hills; westward, miles out Wilshire Boulevard to Santa Monica, is the sea; and all the rest is this fantastic gridwork of wide, fast boulevards and wild fast traffic—almost no electric cars, few buses, almost no cops. The houses line street after street, clean and white, set back on their lawns, half concealed by trees, flowers, shrubwork. It is a semi-tropical city and the architecture by now is pleasantly worked into the climate and the romping vegetation (you never saw a city with so many trees, palms, elms, larch, maple—anything that could be stuck in the ground along what was once a "development" but presently became shady accustomed streets). The jokes about Hollywood monstrosities are as dated as the monstrosities themselves—which, like Grauman's Chinese Theatre, are lulus when you still find them, like a nightmare in a box of mirrors. Most of the buildings of today are simple, effective, airy and often beautiful, stores and houses alike; and if you are out for laughs there are always the gas stations, cathedrals in many different languages.

Living there is of course a different matter and will come, like everything in its place, later.

OTIS FERGUSON

# The Uneasy Collaboration

THE FOREIGN POLICY of the West is based on the hope that Stalin will defeat Hitler without collecting the fruits of victory. It is based, in short, on the hope that the moon is made of green cheese. The West also hopes that Hitler will be defeated by the Soviet Union without suffering the natural consequences of defeat, Soviet invasion and Soviet suzerainty. Again, this is the hope that water will run backward and uphill after it has cleared the falls. In other words, the policy of the West is realism itself up to the point at which it decides to help the Soviet Union; beyond that point it is fantasy, evasion and opportunism. A stubborn mental block operates in the premises. We do not dare to look beyond the physical battle on the eastern front. We want the victory of communism over fascism without the spread of communism; we plead for a major demonstration of Soviet might, without extension of that might over Europe. Our approach is unhistorical, haphazard and dreamlike.

One upshot may be niggardly help, too little and too late, extended on the end of a long pole to an ally we can barely tolerate. We have already seen the long, glum, dubious pause that marked the initial fortnight of the Nazi-Soviet war, in which the West said all the right things but did not do them.

Actually, we are lost in the secret dream that black cats, yet unborn, will walk across the paths of both Hitler and Stalin, that evil luck will attend them and dog their days, that they will break mirrors together. In what Mr. Churchill has rightly called a climactic moment, our equipment for participating in the planetary decisions now being made is the fact that we have our fingers crossed. It is not enough.

How are we to become captains of our souls, masters of our fates, so that we may undertake the necessary military task of aiding the Soviet Union, but strongly, sturdily and without secret fears? The moment obviously calls for the greatest offensive yet unleashed in the West for the solution of its own economic and social problems. It is no accident that those among us, from Hearst to Hoover, who have been most afraid of the social cost of solving our own problems, are also most afraid of aid to or contact with the Soviet Union. They see in the dubious Soviet paradise one form of reckoning and retribution for their social sins of omission here. They are tenaciously determined that we shall not solve our problems at home, but they are dreadfully scared

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of the fishwife under the sign of the hammer-and-sickle who may some day call them to account for their bleak decision. They see in the isms the consequences of social failure, but are determined to enjoy social failure without experiencing the isms; a magnificent stubbornness, leading to such tortured "lines" as that promulgated by Herbert Hoover, who would help England, but not Russia. His speech was merely a long-drawn-out quaver over a coast-to-coast hookup, telling us only that Herbert Hoover was scared.

We can lose our fears if we will come out of our ivory air-raid shelters long enough to insist on basic solutions for our fundamental internal problems. The very language of liberalism must change, to be big enough for the current big moment. It was sufficient, a few years ago, to speak in terms of social security and housing, rural electrification and truth-in-securities. But the language of yesteryear's advanced liberalism has become the prattle of politicians today; almost everything we have advocated has been accepted, at least in principle. Liberalism must now take a deep breath and learn to speak, perhaps at first tentatively, then with increasing boldness, in terms, say, of complete and lasting employment, regardless of cost, for the entire would-be working population of the country. Give us that, and we can face the isms boldly and on better than even conditions; they will have nothing left to offer us except loss of our civil rights. We can then help the Soviet Union in the prosecution of its necessary military task with clear and untroubled minds, and we can sleep of nights. The missing ingredient in the front we present to the world is precisely this affirmation of control over our own destiny. Fear that we had no such control led to the pro-fascist conspiracies of 1938.

We must learn to make it a horror and a scandal that a single man in need of work should be without it. We must teach the truth that discussion of the cost of providing work for all is not in the same category as discussion of the cost of building a new playground; it is in the category of discussion of the cost of dousing fires; he who will not pay the necessary price is an arsonist at heart. We must make complete and lasting employment our demand, and drive the demand home with words that whip and raise large warm welts on the body politic. Our fear of the Russian ideology is linked with our own disastrous failure to solve our own employment problem. This may translate itself into the second failure of inadequate assistance to the Soviet Union. We are not free to act because we are frightened. We deal in dreamlike hopes because we are not ready to deal in affirmative directions; we need more social speed to maintain our steering headway. The bewildered are condemned to be both for and against Soviet Russia; the strong could use her. We need to assert mastery. The world waits for our affirmation, our first trials in the new and bolder liberal tongue; our own bespeaking of our own future in terms large enough to make it safe for us to do the necessary.

SAMUEL GRAFTON

# Washington Notes

## Our New Ally

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, vacationing at Hyde Park, received felicitations on the Fourth of July from President Kalinin of the USSR. Washington correspondents received engraved envelopes from the Embassy of the USSR. Inside, neatly mimeographed, were full and official texts of an address delivered the day before in Moscow by J. V. Stalin, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and chairman of the National Defense Committee. The address bade the Russian people fight for their motherland, put torch to every bridge and every bushel of grain they were forced to abandon to the German invader and take their place beside the British and American defenders of "democratic liberties."

"It will be a united front of peoples standing for freedom and against enslavement and threats of enslavement by Hitler's fascist armies," the text ran. "In this connection the historic utterances of British Prime Minister Churchill regarding aid to the Soviet Union and the declaration of the United States government signifying readiness to render aid to our country, which can only evoke a feeling of gratitude in the hearts of the peoples of the Soviet Union, are fully comprehensible and symptomatic."

All this gallantry, all this devotion to democratic liberties, all this warm gratitude to nations which were frankly offering to support Russia as the lesser of two world evils had about it an aura of embarrassing courtliness. It is as if the groom at a shotgun wedding were to announce to the bride in a loud voice, so all the guests could hear him, that he was the happiest man in the world and didn't know how to account for his good fortune. The Russians had done everything they could to avoid the alliance they now so vociferously welcomed. Not until their country was actually invaded did they decide that the shooting was about a moral issue.

Nevertheless, human memory being as short as it is, the Stalin speech was skillful propaganda. It was appealing in its red-faced acceptance of the we-still-don't-like-you reservations set forth in Churchill's speech. More important, Stalin said what Washington and London wanted to hear —that Russia's bridges would be burned both figuratively and physically. It left no question about the Kremlin's determination to fight for the soil of Russia. If the Soviet is to be another Vichy, it will be so over the dead bodies of Stalin and his associates. The Soviet dictator's call to arms left him no visible loophole for treachery. It uncrossed many fingers in the State and War Departments and made it easier for the administration to carry through with its aid-to-Russia policy.

In other ways, too, Russia's rulers have done much to make their war policies appealing to the democracies. Stalin emphasized patriotism and self-defense, and all other Russian propaganda has followed this line. The world revolutionary objectives of the Soviet regime have been, if not forgotten, at least unmentioned. Radio reports from friendly Ankara have spoken of the "strong renaissance" of the

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Orthodox Church and "a wave of old-fashioned bourgeois patriotism." Indeed, the impression is being created that Russia, once peace is restored, will largely unrevolutionize herself.

How the Russian people themselves feel about all this it is of course impossible to tell. They probably haven't been let in on much of it. Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White, in their radio broadcasts, have spoken enthusiastically of the national morale. Reports from the fighting front, such as they are, add up to the conclusion that the Russian armies are fighting stubbornly against a superior military machine.

There can be no doubt that Washington has been agreeably surprised by the Russian performance so far and that this surprise will find expression in a real effort to give the Soviets material assistance. The new chumminess of Sumner Welles and Ambassador Oumansky is not just mugging for the newsreels.

The forgotten men in all this are the American Communists. To the Soviets they are at this moment a liability. To the Roosevelt administration they are still the gang that tried to wreck the defense effort. The latest turn has thrown them off the train in a body. There is nothing much left for them but to nurse their bruises on the right of way and reorganize as a Trotskyist party.

President Roosevelt has found it possible to sidestep the isolationists in Congress for several months. But they are about to get several cracks at him. Their chances will come when Leon Henderson's price-fixing legislation, the army's bill permitting use of American troops outside this hemisphere and extending the active service of National Guard and selective-service units and the tax bill come up for consideration by House and Senate. Defeat on any one of these issues would immeasurably set back the President's program.

In connection with the price problem, administration officials are giving serious thought to suggestions that a labor policy board be created to police wages. Speaking before labor economists recently, Henderson expressed the hope that they would not advise their unions to demand wages so high that the boosts would bring on inflation. He pointed out that if prices run away, payroll increases will be more than wiped out. So far, most of the increases won by collective bargaining in defense industries have been absorbed by producers. But the saturation point is not far off in some places and, unless labor's own economists follow Henderson's advice, the government will have to protect the unions from themselves.

Defeat of the wire-tapping bill in the House was also a defeat for J. Edgar Hoover, who wanted the power and persuaded the Justice Department to support him in his effort to get it. He may also lose some of the prerogatives of which he is so jealous by the President's appointment of William Donovan as over-all chief of the war intelligence services. But Hoover hasn't lost his influence over the administration, not by any means. He is credited with holding up appointment of Francis Biddle as Attorney General succeeding Robert H. Jackson. The probability is that not more than five Senators will join Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland in opposing Jackson's confirmation for the Supreme Court. Even the Republicans were shocked by Tydings' performance before the Senate Judiciary Committee. He admitted to the committee that Jackson's only offense was refusal to use criminal libel law against Drew Pearson, one of the Senator's journalist critics.

*Washington* T. R. B.

# The Bandwagon

Adolf Hitler's newspaper attacked the Russians scathingly for allowing the Nazis to proceed into traps and then firing on them from the sides and rear. – *From the news summary on the first page of The New York Times.*

Italians should be employed in defense industries because, if it were not for Italy and Germany, there would not be any defense industries, Adam Armond Ciabattari wrote to the Fairchild Aviation Corporation, according to FBI agents, who said he had threatened in the letter to blow up the corporation's plant in Jamaica, Queens. – *From The New York Times.*

There were occasional headaches, convulsions and comas [from the use of arsenical compounds]. Once in 400 treatments there was a death. But there was no evidence of any permanent damage. – *From the article "Syphilis and Defense" in Waldemar Kaempffert's science column in The New York Times.*

### She's My Fleabane, I'm Her Tare

As the boy comes home from the fleet, back on shore leave to village and farm, the Girl Who Loves a Sailor—practically every woman in America—waits with smiling, proud eyes to kiss him at the station, walk with him past the schoolhouse where they both studied and sit with him on the porch and plan for "after the war."

Unnoticed as they stroll in the park, village common or down to the ol' swimmin' hole in the meadow, the Girl Who Loved a Sailor long ago, in the Civil War, the Spanish War and the First World War stands by the roadside smiling. She is the daisy fleabane, Erigeron ramosus or E. annuus, weeds standing for the common people who fight wars and sacrifice to rear children—and are the salt of the earth. – *From the column "News Outside the Door," by J. Otis Swift in The New York World-Telegram.*

### When You Say That, Smile

President Risto Ryti announced in a broadcast last night that Finland had embarked "on a defensive battle with the armed forces of the greater German empire under the command of their genial leader Reichschancellor Hitler" as allies. – *From The New York World-Telegram.*

### Heaven-Is-My-Destination Department

Wanted—A brave girl to stand against a 48" board and allow Rajah Raboid, sensational mind reader, to throw knives around her body with both his eyes sealed. Applicants apply to stage door of the Lyric Theatre, 12 noon on Wed., June 25. A $250 life insurance policy will be presented free to the girl chosen. Excellent salary and chance for advancement. – *Advertisement in The Indianapolis Star.*

*Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping.* – THE EDITORS

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# Correspondence

## The New Republic in France

SIR: I wish I could tell you what your paper means to me, especially at the present time when the fear of being led astray, because all may be "too little and too late" makes one dread as a possible outcome of this civil war the enslavement of the have-nots (people not nations) by the haves everywhere—and nobody knows for how long.

*Aix en Provence, France* T. P.

## Create a Diversion!

SIR: I agree with your editorial, "Create a Second Front!" (The New Republic, July 7). Having myself fought in the French army against Hitler's military machine, I know how much the Germans were frightened by the prospect of a two-front war. After the collapse of France (due to a great extent to the pro-Fascist elements in the French General Staff), many German officers voiced their fear of losing the war because of the resistance of Great Britain and because of the increasing help of the United States to the Allies. Frequently they were heard saying: We are fortunate that the Russians are not against us.

But this same prospect of a two-front war was a great hope to the peoples of occupied Europe and especially to the people of France. A two-front war, for which they waited patiently, would be their great opportunity to rise against the German occupation and to help the Allied forces. Actually, through the invasion of Russia by Germany, the chances of a two-front war are most favorable. England has resisted successfully; the United States help to the Allies is increasing every day; and the German army is engaged in a Napoleonic battle in Russia. An invasion attempt on certain German-occupied countries in Europe would require a fourth of the forces which would be needed if all the German forces were available.

Landings both from the Atlantic (in Brittany) or from the Mediterranean (southern coast of France) would find a much weakened resistance. Much of the German air force is away; the Panzer divisions are mostly on the Russian battlefields; the infantry divisions are composed of older Germans, and of Italians.

According to reliable estimates, the population is 90 percent opposed to Germany and to the Puppet Government No. 1 at Vichy. We should not forget that the anti-fascist feeling has become an immense political factor in occupied Europe after one year of occupation.

The creation of a second front would oblige the Germans to withdraw large forces from Russia. Such a withdrawal would give the Russians a chance to utilize their innumerable divisions and quantities of equipment at a great advantage to themselves. Moreover, the number of German divisions for police work and, consequently, not available for war operations, will have to be greatly increased, for beyond any doubt the peoples of the occupied countries would avail themselves of the opportunity to fight for their independence. For the first time the German army would face serious difficulties, and for the first time its plans would be quickly counteracted.

North Africa, too, offers numerous possibilities. Weygand's army has no equipment; the shore batteries are of only short range; the mass of soldiers and the local populace are terribly afraid of being completely dominated by the Germans.

Will the democracies, all the democracies, understand and make the quickest and fullest use of a unique and possibly brief chance? Will they encourage or discourage the 150,000,000 people—the 10,000 political divisions—of occupied Europe?

*New York City* LOUIS DOLIVET

## We're Still in the Army

*Here are two more letters from trainees. Again we ask our readers to remember that these are first and not final impressions.* — THE EDITORS

SIR: I am in an army camp in Texas and I am slowly going crazy. Every patriot who slaps the selectees on the back and tells them they're off for a year's vacation should do—not much—just sixty days. It's a combination of Alcatraz and "naughty boy has to stay after school." The first thing they tell you is not to think. Your officers are paid to think (those who are able). You just obey orders—but obey. You drill and drill till you're ready to drop, then you do Manual of Arms till your arms are ready to fall off, then you march on cement, through grass, through mud. After chow in the evening, you're off. Then you take your "spare time" (from 5:30 to 9:00) to clean your rifle, wash your clothes, because you haven't got enough to wait for the laundry to come back, write your mail, take a shower, and recline (?) in your tent. At 9:00 lights out. At 5:45 first call. You rise, dress and make your bed. When I say make your bed, I'm not kidding. You strip it down completely and turn the mattress; then replace everything, not the way *you* want, but the way the army wants. At 6:10 is reveille—first formation and roll call. Then wash and shave (compulsory). At 6:45 chow. At 7:30 second formation, then drill, drill, drill till 11:45. Chow at 12:00. Afternoon formation at 12:45. Then drill, drill, drill. Surcease comes at 4:00-4:30. Then chow and—you take it from there. First we are quarantined. Then we're confined to camp limits until our recruit training is over (about six weeks altogether). Then you can leave the camp every evening, but there's no place to go. The worst of it is that I don't think we'll be back in a year. The attitude of the officers down here is war—sooner or later but inevitably.

As for Texas, I'll take spinach. This part of the state is just flat as far as the eye can see and very dull. The climate just now is chilly in the morning and warmer in the afternoon and evening, if it doesn't rain. Today was the first complete day without rain. The mud is up to our knees except in deep spots. When the rain stops it will get so infernally hot, they tell me, that you walk around parched all day.

In addition, the country is infested with rattlesnakes, moccasins and various other types of poisonous snakes, poisonous centipedes, scorpions and spiders and gigantic tropical mosquitoes. Incidentally, our regimental insignia is a scorpion. The food is lousy. That is to say, most of the cooks are Southerners. You've probably heard of Southern cooking. To give you a rough idea, I've stopped drinking coffee.

I'll probably live through this like anybody else and come back bitter and healthy. But who wants to be healthy? Can you picture me marching with a rifle on my shoulder, eyes straight ahead, no mind of my own, just an automaton. We sit at mess like convicts; you pick up all your dishes, cutlery, garbage, drop it on the way out. Take your hat off; salute, salute, salute—chirp, chirp, I'm a little birdie—and not a drink. *That* is uncivilized. PRIVATE O. L.

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SIR: The food, clothing and shelter are reasonably good. Naturally in large masses of men, some individuals are bound to have grievances against the treatment accorded them in one or more of these three categories. But on the whole you can put the army down as doing a good job in supplying the enlisted personnel with the necessities of life.

The lack of recreation facilities for leisure periods is a serious problem for most camps at present. The future will undoubtedly see an improvement, but for the present most men have to rely upon their own resources to utilize their spare time to advantage.

I have read your weekly for a good number of years and note that you tend to regard most army officers as having latent anti-democratic tendencies and a personal feeling of superiority to the enlisted men. I have the following to say on this subject: When a private is raised to corporal or sergeant he is usually apt to hold himself in a slightly exalted state over the private. In fact any private securing any sort of distinction over his fellow privates is inclined to regard himself as being a better man than the fellow who does not attain distinction.

Like so many other legends of our generation, the notion that army officers are inherently snobs and anti-democratic is untrue. Judging from the experience of others, as well as my own, I believe that the American officer is truly a humane, liberal and democratic man. I have seen officers battling for the welfare of their men at the cost of personal sacrifice. There are few men here at Fort Ord who can say that they haven't been treated in a considerate manner in every respect by all officers on this post. Frankly I have been amazed by the degree of humaneness that the officers show to all men. Without being lax in discipline, they manage to convey to all men a sense of being personally concerned with each one's problems and I know that our Fort has the feeling that all of us, officers and men, are facing the same common, uncertain future with an appreciation of the indissoluble ties that bind us all to a unity for the preservation of our country. The army is a reflection of a nation. Like the United States of America itself, the army, with all its shortcomings, is still the greatest and freeest congregation of men on the face of this earth.

*Fort Ord, Calif.* PRIVATE IRVING PERLMAN

## Letters from England

SIR: Although myself a lifelong socialist and an ex-pacifist ("still a pacifist" in the Bruce Bliven sense), I can't help feeling that the occasional "letters from England" printed by you in your correspondence pages do oddly tend to present the negative or "depressed" state of British feeling about and reaction to the war. I don't question the truth of any of the statements made, but the cumulative effect seems to me to suggest an England with far less kick in it than is actually the case.

*Of course* we don't like the war. But I'm damned if we are lying down under it. It is missing the key to the whole psychological attitude of the British in their present situation to write of the prospect of another winter as "really alarming." If it comes to that, every day and every hour is "really alarming," since one never knows when death and destruction may strike either at oneself or at everything making one's whole life worth while, or what shattering news the next newspaper or radio broadcast may carry. But we don't spend our days and nights shuddering at these terrors. If they come, they come; meanwhile we live, work, laugh, love, go to the cinema, go to the theatre, read, walk, talk, write, eat, drink and all the rest of it. The fact is that we are fighting—and the overwhelming majority of us know it—not because we want to do so but because we have no alternative; and it is, I think, plainly true that the fact of having no alternative brings to most people not "alarm and despondency" but a strange steadiness. If there were alternatives, we might weaken; we might start squabbling among ourselves as to which—this or that—would be the better to take, and then indeed the sheer terror of war's destruction might beset us and paralyze us to defeat. If you *can* dodge an ordeal, it is only human to do so. But when you *can't* do so, then you find strange resources inside yourself to confront necessity. If we have anything in this world to thank Hitler for, it is that he has made the very idea of his victory so revolting that all other "alarms" turn to rose-color beside it.

When the Donner Party got stranded in the high Sierras in 1846 they could either lie down in the snow and die or they could fight to the last for life. A great number of them fought, not only heroically but superhumanly, ordinary men and women turned into heroes and heroines by sheer pressure of circumstance, to a point which makes their terrible story in the last resort one not of horror but of man's nobility. And as between the snow and the Gestapo, who would not take the snow any day! The only "really alarming" possibility for most of us is not another winter of war but a winter *not* at war . . . with the swastika flying from our English towers.

*Also Somewhere in England* GEOFFREY WEST

## Crime and Punishment

SIR: Some time ago you questioned in an editorial note Vincent Sheean's assertion that in Soviet Russia the death penalty for theft, as well as other crimes, was extended to children twelve years old. I intended then to tell you that you would find the decree in Pravda for April 8, 1935. Just lately I published this reference in an article in Reader's Digest, but through a typographical accident the date reads 1939. Pending a correction by them, which is a long way off, you would immensely relieve my distress, as well as give your readers an important piece of information, if you would publish this letter.

*Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, Mass.* MAX EASTMAN

## *From The New Republic Mail Bag*

Miss Madleine M. Smith of Carbondale, Illinois, says that "among the innumerable other fine articles that appear in The New Republic," what gets her enthusiastic endorsement is T. R. B.'s comment on the absence of war hysteria following the Robin Moor incident. . . . Harold R. Kelman of New York City tells us that the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, of which he is secretary, was formed recently to advance the science "in a spirit of free inquiry, tolerance and open-mindedness." The major activity for its first year will center around its training program, which will be carried out through the American Institute for Psychoanalysis.

Sidney X. Sussman of New York City and T. M. Halajian of Detroit both register disagreement with Norman Angell's communication in the June 9 issue. Mr. Halajian asks was Mr. Angell anxious to tell the news when Britain was bombing natives of her colonies? Mr. Sussman says the Irish oppressions are hardly seven hundred years old, as Mr. Angell suggests, "since they were the subject of a congressional resolution of condemnation, and Congress is not that old."

John H. Culley of Los Angeles, on the other hand, says that as an English-born American citizen with several relatives connected with colonial administration, he seconds Mr. Angell's views. If anything, the British have erred on the side of overindulgence of the natives, he says, adding that if Britain is asked to give up her colonies, we (*i. e.*, the United States) should return California and Texas to Mexico. "Our acquisition of the native people was nothing short of a disgrace," he says, referring to the American Southwest. "I *know* what I am speaking about in the latter instance."

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# English Writing in Total War

AT A TIME when paper is scarce and the younger writers are mostly in battledress it is not easy to be sure what is happening, but I think one can safely say that no literary revival is likely in England in the near future. The so-called Communist writers dominated the nineteen-thirties, and they had begun to lose their unity and self-confidence long before the Russo-German pact was signed. The Spanish civil war, with its orgies of lying and its frightening revival of the war propaganda of 1914-18, drove away the more talented of them, and no organized group has arisen to take their place. So far as I know, the only literary "school" which has appeared in England in the last few years is the Apocalyptic Group, a handful of very young writers who seem merely to be practising a variant of Surrealism and not to possess any very striking talents. There was also the small group that centered about Henry Miller, but these were mostly expatriate Americans and Europeans; they did not produce anything of much value except Miller's "Tropic of Cancer," and the war has scattered them with exceptional thoroughness.

Editors and publishers report that the output of verse has risen since the war, but one has only to glance at the magazines to see that its average quality has not. The literary standard of "New Writing," the bi-yearly publication which used to be the rallying point of the left-wing intelligentsia, has deteriorated markedly. Novels are still being published, but they are terribly bad ones. The few of any value which have appeared within the past year have all been either American or translations of foreign books written before the war. The best English work, other than political journalism, has been of a fragmentary autobiographical kind, war diaries and letters from soldiers. No one, I believe, is sitting down to produce large-scale imaginative work, and I doubt whether any but a very insensitive person could do so at a time like this. If one discusses English literature at this moment, therefore, one has to prophesy rather than record. One has to discuss not so much what is happening as what is likely to happen when the political interregnum that we are now in is finished. But before doing so it is worth mentioning certain by-products of the situation, the physical effects, as it were, of war on literature, which had not been foreseen and which have their importance.

One is that though fewer books are being produced, people are reading more. This is a result of the loneliness of soldiers in muddy camps, and the necessary dwindling of other amusements, especially since the air raids have prevented the movie theatres from opening at night. There have been immense sales of sixpenny reprints (the Penguin Books, Pelican Books and other similar series), and the general level of these is fairly high, far higher than would have been commercially possible ten years ago. Simultaneously there has been a startling improvement in the tone of the popular press. For years past the English daily press has been controlled effectively by its advertisers, chiefly advertisers for consumption goods, who have had an interest in keeping the public as stupid, credulous and ill informed as possible. That state of affairs has changed, partly because internal trade has shrunk to a minimum, partly because all but a few newspapers are now reduced to four pages and the official communiqués crowd out the rubbish that used to fill them. All of the press that matters will probably be under direct state control within a year, but for the time being the journalists have escaped from the dictatorship of the chocolate manufacturers and it is no longer impossible for an intelligent political article to appear in a daily paper. Since the Dunkirk campaign there has been a big output of political books costing about half a dollar, more definitely "left" and far more honest than the Left Book Club publications of a couple of years ago. The big public is markedly less silly than it used to be. On its lower reaches one must say that literature has not suffered from the war.

But on the Bloomsbury front the situation is different. Reading American periodicals I note, even now, an air of detachment rather similar to what used to prevail in England when Hitler was merely beating up the Jews in Vienna. If one is looking through the wrong end of the telescope it is easy to see this war as simply a repetition or continuation of the last. The prevailing habit of mind is quite different from what it was in the last war, however, because no thinking person any longer takes the continuity of civilization for granted. Churchill and Hitler may stand for the same thing, as the Marxists were assuring us until a few days ago, but in practice even the Marxists haven't believed this to be so. The British intelligentsia now have at the back of their minds the knowledge that if Hitler wins it means death or exile for themselves. We are accustomed to talking about "eternal values" in connection with literature, but in fact literature as we know it is the product of liberal capitalism and may be inseparable from it; in any case a literature founded on what we now call intellectual honesty is not likely to survive the worldwide triumph of fascism. Within a few years freedom of the press may be merely a half-forgotten phrase. Moreover, it is now widely grasped that even if Hitler is defeated, the economic status of writers and artists will alter in the process. Manifestly we are moving toward some form of state socialism or state capitalism which will not be able to afford huge armies of non-producing intellectuals.

For twenty years literature in England has been parasitic on itself. The practitioners of the arts are so numerous that they themselves form a public, and the high-brow weeklies and monthlies are essentially trade papers. The mere poverty of the post-war world will alter this. The old, easy life of the writer, living where he likes, working or not as he chooses, producing perhaps one book a year and getting several hundred pounds for it, is obviously at an end. Add to this the sense of impermanence that everyone now has, because of the consciousness that if one is fit enough to walk and not already in a safe government job one will probably before long be either in the armed forces or working in a factory. Add finally the air raids, and you can see how hard it is at present to settle to any serious work, except on a very small scale. Anyone who sits down to write a book which will take him, say, a year has to do so with at any rate a considerable doubt in his mind as to whether it will ever be printed.

But more important than any of this is the absence of any feeling of purpose. Art is not the same thing as propaganda, but it is a fact that every work of art has a "message" concealed somewhere in it and every literary movement centers about a political program. Last year, after Dunkirk, there was what appeared to be the beginning of a new political movement in England, but Churchill's masterful

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personality and the absence of any leadership on the Left have bottled it down. The whole trend of government policy and of what one may call respectable opinion is against giving the war any meaning whatever. This does not matter if one realizes that a country's war aims are not what its governing classes imagine, but what is likely actually to happen if it is victorious. However easy it may be to demonstrate that "this is a capitalist war," in practice it will make a lot of difference who wins. The English intelligentsia recognize this, but rather tepidly. They cannot feel the same enthusiasm as they felt for the curtain-raiser, the Spanish civil war. The defection of their one-time idol, Stalin, has left a gap which cannot be filled either by Hitler—because he intends to kill them if he can get hold of them—or by any English figure, because they have sniggered at patriotism so long that they have almost killed it within themselves. In left-wing literary circles the fashionable thing to say is that "this war is entirely meaningless." At the same time hardly anyone is in favor of stopping fighting and the volume of actively pro-Nazi feeling is negligible. After all, Hitler is the world's leading book-burner, and therefore for all writers of books the war *has* a meaning of sorts. But out of anything so negative it is difficult for a literary movement to arise.

So far as one can discover, the youngest members of the intelligentsia, the youths and girls who would now be beginning to produce printable work if the times were normal, are vaguely "anti-war." This does not mean that they will refuse to serve in the army, or fight less bravely than anyone else, but merely that they do not see before them any prospect about which they can feel enthusiastic. One could hardly blame the very young, those who are now twenty or thereabouts, if they took refuge in complete irresponsibility and hedonism. They have grown up into an epoch of wars which may last for decades, and they have not got behind them the peaceful integrated life which was the background of those who were young in 1914. There are signs of a return to something that one may roughly call individualism—that is, to a renewed respect for intellectual integrity. Those who are now beginning to write probably do not feel, as their forerunners did ten years ago, that there is something noble in telling lies and degrading your esthetic standards for a political cause. The few promising bits of work by very young writers that I have seen recently were all of them purely personal, subjective, "innocent of public spirit." If a book of any value is now being written anywhere in England I should expect it to be along those lines. Even an outbreak of "escapism" would not be surprising, though there is no sign of one as yet.

The general level of intelligence in England is now higher than it has ever been, and the basis for a majority culture exists as it has not existed for centuries. But all that that ensures is better popular journalism and better music-hall sketches. There seems no chance of any major literary work appearing until the future is more predictable and thinking people have less feeling of helplessness. It may be that those conditions can't be fulfilled till the war is over. But it seems certain that our present anomalous situation—a war against fascism, waged by reactionaries—cannot continue much longer, and when the necessary political changes have taken place the sense of purpose and continuity may return, even though the bombs are still dropping. Whether that will lead to the birth of another "movement" I do not know. I do believe, however, that against the time when it will again be possible to write we are storing up valuable material. It is noticeable that though no one seems to disapprove very much of the English writers who have removed themselves to the U. S. A., nobody wants to change places with them. Looking back over the strange boring nightmare of this last year in London, I have the feeling of having learned a lot from it, as I did from that other nightmare of the Spanish war. I know that this feeling is widely shared. Perhaps in the end all this will turn out to have been a blessing in disguise, though certainly it is a very deep disguise at present. But don't look for any book of consequence to be published in England in the near future, for the people who are still young enough to learn are most of them too busy or too depressed to write. GEORGE ORWELL

## The Walking Plum

Something dark is working in my trees . . .
See that plum? From somewhere she comes back
With red clay on her roots, not barnyard black.
She moves of a night. I wouldn't fault a plum
For walking, except this one's a foreign species
What don't belong. Where'd she come from?
What's she up to, conniving after dark
With cedars, likely?

Ah, there's her bell . . .
Yep, I belled her crown so's I could tell
If walking was a trade or just a lark.
It's neither. Last night I seen her moving slow
Amongst the sycamores that guard the river.
All blossomed out she was, bell tinkling low;
And slipping each one a kiss that made them shiver,
She passed from tree to tree like all was well.
There's something about the river she wants to know.
Oh, she seen me too! Took root suddenlike
And played another tree. I strolled for a spell
To head her off, then lit out up the pike
Toward home. But every stride I heard her bell
Come clanging like a freight-train down the track,
And when my last jump cleared the barnyard gate
Damn if that plumtree hadn't beat me back!

Chop her down? I'm scared that comes too late.
Tree-talk spreads so fast no axe can stop
It. Watch them maples nodding heads on top
The hill. What's their plan? A sudden attack
On the barn tonight? No tree about the place
She ain't corrupted: walnut branches crack
In the sun; when poplars whiff a rainy breeze
Their shameful leaves won't look me in the face;
And even aspens whisper behind my back . . .
From now on, friend, I'd keep an eye on trees:
A man can't be too careful, times like these.

PRESTON NEWMAN

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# Books in Review

## A Grammar of Assent

A CRITIC'S PERSPECTIVE," as the author of this book[1] himself says, "implicitly selects a set of questions that the critic considers to be key questions." Mr. Burke stands in the line of critics like Richards and Empson whose key questions are: What does poetry mean? Why is it written? How does it accomplish its end? Such a criticism could only arise within a society which says: "I don't like poetry." It presupposes statements like: "Poetry is wrong because it says things which aren't true," or, "Poetry is wrong because it doesn't do anything useful." It is, in fact, literary apologetics and, like most apologetics, concerned less with the conversion of the heathen than with keeping up the morale of the faithful by showing that it can use the same weapons as well as or better than the enemy: against the logician it develops a more rigorous method of verbal analysis; against the psychologist and the sociologist it adopts the approaches of Freud and Marx.

No isolated quotations can do justice to Mr. Burke's subtlety and good sense, and no doubts that one may entertain about the soundness of his critical position can obscure the fact that he is unquestionably the most brilliant and suggestive critic now writing in America:

> The threat is the basis of beauty. . . . Power or distance disproportionate to ourselves is "sublime." We equip ourselves to confront it by piety, by stylistic medicine, and by structural assertion (form, a public matter that symbolically enrolls us with allies who will share the burden with us). The ridiculous, on the contrary, equips us by impiety, as we refuse to allow the threat its authority; we rebel and courageously play pranks when "Acts of God" themselves are oppressing us.
>
> The semantic ideal would attempt to get a description by the elimination of attitude; it envisions a vocabulary that *avoids* drama. . . . The poetic ideal would attempt to attain a full moral act by attaining a perspective atop all the conflicts of attitude; it envisions a vocabulary that *goes through* drama. . . . The poetic vocabulary, when complete, will take us *into-and-out-of*. When incomplete, it will take us *into*, and seek to leave us there. While the semantic vocabulary would, I think, unintentionally cheat us by keeping us *without*, providing a kind of quietus in advance.
>
> If we try to discover what the poem is doing for the poet, we may discover a set of generalizations as to what poems do for everybody. With these in mind, we have cues for analyzing the sort of *eventfulness* that the poem contains, and in analyzing this eventfulness, we shall make basic discoveries about the *structure* of the work itself. . . . Observation about structure is more relevant when you approach the work as the *functioning* of a structure.

The limitations of such a criticism are those of any purely defensive position. Very honestly Mr. Burke admits the correctness of Mr. Blackmur's objection that "this method could be applied with equal fruitfulness to Shakespeare, Dashiell Hammett or Marie Corelli," and justifies himself by saying: "You can't properly put Marie Corelli and Shakespeare apart until you have first put them together." But is this really true to our everyday experience? We experience, surely, works of art one by one, not simultaneously, and our response, This-is-Good or This-is-Bad, is first of all to the work experienced in isolation from other works. It is only when we attempt to account for the differences between our various responses that we begin to see similarities in the works to which we respond. *Unless*, of course, we are in a beleaguered fort round which the savages are howling with equal ferocity for the blood of Shakespeare *and* Corelli.

It is the siege mentality, I think, that makes Mr. Burke overdo the division between the semantic and the poetic, that makes him emphasize, quite rightly, the role of synecdoche in the poetic, but, because it is shared by the semantic vocabulary, ignore an equally important function of words, namely, the way in which they recover the Possible from the Actual. When I perceive, say, a house, my experience is unique, determined and incommunicable, but by giving my experience a name, I take it out of the world of physical events and endow it with the freedom to join in all the possible verbal contexts where the word "house" can be used. By concentrating on symbolic meaning, the ways in which "house" can mean This-House-plus, and ignoring general meaning, the ways in which "house" can mean not-This-House-but-all-possible-houses, Mr. Burke's kind of poetic analysis has the effect of making ambiguities *per se* (the *into*), the whole source of esthetic interest, leaving out of account the indicative order (the *out of*) into which the poem finally decides that they shall fall.

As a methodology it can provide us with great insights if, but only if, we are already agreed that poetry is valuable and that we already know which poems are good and which are bad. But as a war strategy this is not enough, for one cannot deny the enemy's conclusions and at the same time accept his premises. Accept the logician's premise that there is *no* semantic truth in poetry and you must subscribe to ideal verbal anarchy and the thoroughly anti-authoritarian esthetic which, as Mr. Burke himself warns us, "ends by accepting *any* authority." Accept the Freudian denial of teleology and you can no longer distinguish the "acquiescence" of great art from the "acquiescence" of the movies. Accept the Marxist dogma of economic determinism and the esthetic criticism of Steinbeck's characters that "they can but *be*, they cannot *do*," has no validity. Accept social coöperation as the absolute ethical norm, and you are helpless before the headmaster who says, "What this school needs is more coöperation: that means working with me."

Time and again Mr. Burke drops hints that he is not unaware of these difficulties. "The world of contingencies is now wholly in disarray." "Pure art is safest only when the underlying moral system is sound." Precisely. I suspect that in his next book, Mr. Burke will take the offensive and deal "with the science of last (or, if you will, first) things." I hope so.

W. H. AUDEN

[1] The Philosophy of Literary Form, by Kenneth Burke. Louisiana State University Press. 471 pages. $3.

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# If Beale Street Could Talk

*Father of the Blues, by W. C. Handy. New York: The Macmillan Company. 331 pages. $3.*

THIS IS the autobiography of one of our first folk-music composers, edited for publication but apparently written by Handy himself. As is nearly always true of non-professional writing, the book is not vivid, it is not eloquent about that which we would wish to know; it is honest but it is rambling and dull. Very few can learn the full discipline of more than one art in a short lifetime. And so we continue to have humdrum, disorganized books out of exciting and even significant lives, all the worse when we know that the man isn't talking very well but he sure could whistle it.

Handy's father, an Alabama parson, wouldn't allow any unchristian fooling around with a hellbox of a guitar, even after the kid had hustled to get one as the shining prize of his life. But it was from his father he learned the beautiful phrase about it ain't *getting* religion that counts, sonny, it's *doing* religion, and it was from his father he got the elements of the true dignity and sorrow of his race (his father and mother both traced kinfolks back to noble colored people of the slave days). He learned naturally about every plant and animal that grew around their dirt-floor cabin, most important the music of all the birds. Music was the thing that stirred him, and it may seem only like a quaint anecdote that when he first became aware of the cornet, he went home and hollowed himself out a cow's horn and fitted a mouthpiece to it. Read sociologically, I believe this says a wide thing about the natural music of this country everywhere, which is that music comes somehow when it is badly enough wanted, but otherwise does not come truly. He sang like mad whenever he got the chance; he got an old three-dollar rotary-valve cornet finally, and he had found the door to the world.

Handy was born in 1873; he came before the rise of jazz, lived and worked through it without apparently understanding it; but he came from where it came from, and in a way he represented it. Actually he got his start in minstrel shows, when minstrels were riding high; and his early adventures of traveling with shows the length and breadth of the country, together with details of how the shows were put together and how they worked—sketchy as it is, this is material that you can't get much of anywhere in this later forgetting day. They traveled handsome and by Pullman, but they had to have a car with a concealed "bear-wallow," where the company kept its very real and necessary arsenal, extra supplies of food, and the chance for hiding a trouper when the white hoodlums came swarming as they were sure to come sooner or later. For the colored people, it was like traveling for the delight of the country in some dangerous empire of cannibals, and he reports that the town of Orange, Texas, would stay up all night when their train was routed through there, to shoot up the car as it passed. If God wants to bless America, he might clean it up first, and that would not have to be so retroactive either.

The W. C. Handy we know is the man who learned, almost in spite of himself, that what folks back home were making, with their mouths and improvised instruments, was a kind of music that could be written, and was new and fine. He worked up the Memphis Blues, out of himself and out of what he knew from listening all the time. Then one night he made himself a blues with a three-strand splice, and it is the blues which will be forgotten last of all of them, I guess, and starts, "I hate to see that evenin sun go down." He was a successful band leader, band manager and composer; but usually broke. He went to New York to become a music publisher and for a while was broker. Then he began to get into banquets and meet names and be told interesting stories about people who had become interesting for this or that, and the book wears off into the usual amateur's jumble of honors, occasions and times of day.

We do not wish to think of him as the father of the blues, which are never old and always in the air. There is a life there to be written, of Aunt Hagar's Children, by one of them. It obviously can't be written in a book: no book-outside of facts and dates, it has already been written in its best way and is already there if you would draw up a chair and listen, and it should always be called something like "I woke up this morning. . . ."

OTIS FERGUSON

# The Longest Book Review

*What Mein Kampf Means to America, by Francis Hackett. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock. 308 pages. $2.*

NOW THAT Francis Hackett is no longer a professional book reviewer, he has written the longest of all his reviews, a book in itself with nearly three hundred pages of text. Its subject is of course "Mein Kampf." Its method is largely interpretative; in style it is as urbane and unsensational as the reviews he used to write for The New Republic (and there were few that excelled them). Its principal aims are, first, to explain what Hitler actually said; second, to show that he meant every word of it; third, to persuade more Americans to read his book carefully and act on their knowledge.

Hitler's underlying thesis, it says—though not in these words—is that there is no such thing as the human race; there is only the German race, which is destined by God and History and Nature to rule over other peoples. Not one of these is truly human, and some of them—notably the Jews, the Poles and the Negroes—are non-human or anti-human. The natural, historical and godly mission of the Germans is to conquer them all, thereby fulfilling what Hitler calls "the obligation in accordance with the Eternal Will that dominates this universe, to promote the victory of the better and stronger, and to demand the submission of the worse and weaker." Should the worse and weaker dare to resist; should they actually drop bombs from the sky on the superior race, they would be committing "the most execrable crime. He who dares to lay hands upon the highest image of the Lord sins against the benevolent Creator of this miracle." These are Hitler's words, not those of his reviewer, and during the last eight years they have been wholly in accordance with Hitler's actions. Moreover, Mr. Hackett has discovered one quotation, overlooked by other critics in their eagerness to discover economic motives, which proves that the conquest of the terrestrial globe is not the final goal that Hitler assigns to his master race. He says on page 581 of "Mein Kampf" that "the best of mankind, having acquired possession of this earth, is given a free road for activity in domains which will lie partly above, partly outside it." If

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that means what Mr. Hackett thinks it does—and I see no reason for doubting his interpretation—Hitler is saying that after the Germans under his leadership have subdued the planet Earth, they will launch themselves into outer space. Perhaps the thirty thousand goggled parachutists who dropped from the skies over Crete were rehearsing not only the invasion of England but that of Mars.

This dream is insane and mock-apocalyptic and H. G. Wellsian, but that is no reason for dismissing it. The more one studies Hitler's words for what they say, and for the light they cast on his actions, the more one comes to regard him as an inspired madman who may end by infecting half the world with his folly, and by subjugating the rest of it. His own statements as quoted by Mr. Hackett are the best answer to all the Lindberghs, the Wheelers, the Thomases and (until yesterday) the Fosters and Browders who believe or believed that this war is no concern of ours and that we ought to devote ourselves to creating a private real-estate development, a sort of Paradise Park between two oceans. Some of them are still saying that after Hitler conquers Europe we can strike a business deal with him; but that is because they haven't read "Mein Kampf." Hitler himself makes it clear that you cannot negotiate with a man who regards himself as divinely ordained to conquer the world. You can either surrender to him (perhaps receiving the rank of Honorary Teuton as a reward for yielding) or else you can fight to the death against him. That is the final lesson of this longest book review.

I had thought of comparing Mr. Hackett to Paul Revere, riding through Middlesex County to announce that the Brownshirts are coming; but that is neither fair to him nor quite exact. It is rather that he arrives in Concord later on the same morning to find the Minute Men arguing in little groups instead of standing watch on the green. Speaking in a calm voice, he assures them that all the Reveres have been telling the truth: the Brownshirts are on the march, and in greater force than anyone had expected, and their leader has drawn up and published his plan of battle. My chief complaint against his warning is that perhaps it comes too late—not to save this country, which is going to survive in any case, but to save the sort of society that Mr. Hackett cherishes. For the system that he seems to oppose to Hitlerism is a democracy achieved by "an equilibrium of dogmas"; a tolerant, middle-class, mildly skeptical democracy steering its course "between the rocks of privilege and the whirlpools of the underprivileged"—in a word, a democracy like that of his beloved Denmark before the German invasion. I regret and apologize for having belittled such a democracy in the past; its faults and follies were so close to us, especially during the early years of the depression, that we failed to see the crimes against humanity of other systems. Today it seems almost Utopian—but is there still time to save it? In order to achieve the equilibrium that Mr. Hackett admires, it has to consume much of its strength internally; its dynamic forces have to oppose each other and be canceled off; its foreign policy is usually passive. Has it any chance for success in fighting another system where all internal conflicts are forcibly ended and the total energies of a nation are turned outwards as a single weapon of aggression? Must it not be transformed in order to survive? I ask these questions in all humility, hoping to receive one answer from the future, but prepared to hear another.

MALCOLM COWLEY

# That Students May Think

*That Men May Understand, by Harold Rugg. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 355 pages. $2.75.*

HAROLD RUGG is the son of a Massachusetts carpenter, a descendant of nine generations of Americans. He went to work in a textile mill at the age of sixteen, graduated from Dartmouth, practised and taught engineering and, in 1915, began his life work in the field of general education. The educational movement of which he is at the moment the symbol—much too spectacular a symbol, as he would ruefully agree—is part of the larger movement in American thought which takes the view that American life holds great promise for every one of us; that the promise can be realized by the application of intelligence to American problems; and that intelligence is "critical."

The last of these ideas, which is as novel as Socrates, is the one that makes trouble for Harold Rugg. This book is an effort to point out that critical intelligence implies sympathetic examination and not hostile fault-finding, an attempt to make clear the spirit that lies behind his textbooks, to exhibit as far as is possible in a single volume the material they contain and to discuss the reasons for the recent attacks on them.

These attacks *are* recent. The Rugg books and pamphlets have been in American schools for about eleven years and have been used by 10,000 teachers. There was but one school-board protest against them until a self-appointed group of business men set out to discredit them two or three years ago. Students are delighted by them. They try to tell a complete story, cutting across the conventional boundaries of separate subjects. Students find in them the pleasure of following a narrative which both broadens and comes closer to their own lives as they advance. Professor Rugg and those associated with him in the preparation of the twenty volumes of "Man and His Changing Society" love to teach and they have learned how to do it through a really prodigious amount of studying and testing, writing and rewriting.

"That Men May Understand" was apparently written quickly and is not well organized, but it has the information that is needed now by parents in every community. It points out that the propaganda against the Rugg texts is in part deliberate misstatement, as when quotations from a book written for adults, "The Great Technology," are presented as excerpts from children's schoolbooks, or when evidence that textbooks emphasize the "sordid side of life" is compiled by taking a page on which the parallel-column method of presenting two sides of a controversy has been used and reprinting only one of the columns. It offers a great deal of dependable evidence that Harold Rugg takes his professional obligations as a teacher most seriously, that he tries to be scrupulously impartial in the presentation of debatable matters, that, as good sense would tell anyone who was willing to reflect for a moment, he is well aware that books suitable for certain ages are not suitable for others; in short, that he knows his business.

What his opponents mean when they charge him with mentioning problems of American life to students who are too "immature" to comprehend them is that they do not wish high-school students to suspect that there are any problems at all. On this point Professor Rugg gives battle:

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"To keep issues out of the school program is to keep thought out of it." To his students he says merely, *take thought before you take sides*, which is to say, take the attitude of critical intelligence.

As Professor Warner Fite, who is certainly not a Teachers' College man, has noted, it can be inconvenient for adults when younger people begin to "get ideas," but only by thus making choices for themselves can they achieve moral responsibility. One can understand that it is inconvenient to those who hope the young will echo their insistence that we are all living in the nineteenth century. But we are not, and since the responsibility which today's high-school pupils will have to assume is that of helping to shape and order a new world, it would seem desirable that they should be interested in getting some ideas. BYRON DEXTER

# Inside Story

*Open House, by Theodore Roethke. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 70 pages. $2.*

THE TITLE of this book, and the opening lines of the title poem, at once give the reader to understand that much of the material to follow will be largely self-centered:

> My secrets cry aloud.
> I have no need for tongue.
> My heart keeps open house,
> My doors are widely swung.
> An epic of the eyes
> My love, with no disguise.

Throughout the several sections of the book, varied as they are in manner and theme, the tendency is to revert to this type of preoccupation, in spite of the prayer of the poet, "Deliver me, O Lord, from all/Activity centripetal." Does it sound patronizing to say this is natural in a first book? What saves Roethke from producing sentimental, ordinary or painful results in the process is the blunt and obdurate honesty of statement, even at the cost of flexibility of technique, without embellishment or fancy business. He faces and acknowledges much that he knows or suspects to be wrong inside. His open house is indeed wide open, from attic to basement; you can have a good look not only at the Chippendale chairs, the rings and the relics, but the skeleton in the closet and the family bogeymen.

Some of this work Roethke will not wish to repeat or find profit in repeating. But the book is not padded with practice pieces, poems whose chief value was in the exercise; Roethke has been quite severe in his selection, and every specimen is *per se* valid. He knows, I should hope, that his personal-metaphysical rock will not yield ore indefinitely, but there are indications of other veins he has scarcely begun to exploit. In the poems of nature and the visible world, with the weight of the theme less heavy, the music is richer, more sensuous and deeper; the observation, turned outward, is sensitive, delicate and perceptive, if not yet passionate and intense. Roethke can grow in this direction; and I am sure that readers who enjoy poems like "Academic":

> The stethoscope tells what everyone fears:
> You're likely to go on living for years,
> With a nursemaid waddle and a shopgirl simper
> And the style of your prose growing limper and limper

or "Vernal Sentiment," would like to see a further exercise of his really incisive satirical wit, or a fuller indulgence of his humor. It takes a pretty good poet to be funny without being frivolous.

Toward the end of the book, in "Lull," for instance, or "Highway: Michigan," the consciousness is social as well as personal, and "Idyll" and "Night Journey," the last two poems, speak the word of affirmation, reconciliation and praise. Roethke has not by any means exhausted the possibilities of entertaining with the exposition of his hates; when he learns to overcome a certain diffidence, to speak as bravely and finely of his joys and loves as he has of his terrors and doubts, the house will not be big enough to hold him; he can, as a poet, really go to town.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

## Contributors

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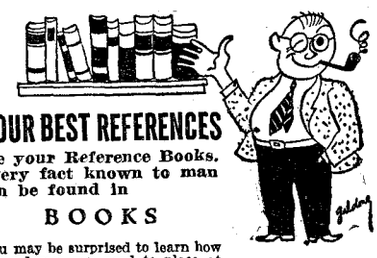

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